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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

REFLECTING ON TEACHERS' STORIES: FINDING WAYS TO LIVE WITH DILEMMAS

BY ©

NOPHANET DHAMBORVORN

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Edmonton, Alberta

SPRING, 1994

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To

My parents

who have always loved and believed

in the person

that is me.

Abstract

How often do we, as experienced teachers, reflect on what we are doing, or give ourselves time to think seriously about our actions in classrooms? This study focuses on the stories of Carol and Michael, two kindergarten teachers in two different schools, in order to understand the dilemmas that these teachers of young children encounter and how they use their educational philosophies to help them manage their teaching dilemmas. The study also explores how the teachers' past experiences influenced their educational philosophies and shaped the ways they frame their dilemmas of teaching.

Narrative inquiry is the chosen research methodology. For a period of six months, I worked as a participant observer in Carol's and Michael's classrooms. As I journeyed with them in the research, I made fieldnotes, recorded our conversations, and kept a journal in which I recorded my feelings, actions, mistakes, and reflections with the hope that writing might lead me to a better understanding of how they managed their dilemmas. In the research process of telling and retelling their teaching stories, the teachers had opportunities to reflect on their teaching experiences and, through the process, found ways to manage their dilemmas.

The stories of the two teachers highlight the need for teachers to be aware of themselves and of what they believe about teaching and learning. It also emphasizes the importance of reflection on action as a way of helping teachers recognize their teaching dilemmas.

Acknowledgement

My research journey is rooted in friendship and caring. As I travel in the research, there are many special people whose lives help me understand my own life. Carol and Michael provide not only their insights and experiences but also hopes for my future teaching. Dr. Janis Blakey who has been a friend with me for so many years gives me freedom and support to create my own space. Dr. Myer Horowitz always provides a pleasant atmosphere and thought provoking dialogue every time I have conversations with him. I thank you all of you. Beyond that, I would like to offer special thanks to Dr. Daiyo Sawada, Dr. Ken Jacknicke, and Dr. Sandra Hollingsworth who read and commented on the work in detail.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER PAGE

I. NARRATIVE BEGINNINGS.................................... 1

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.............................. 7

Toward a Teacher's Philosophy.................................. 7

Toward a Teacher's Philosophy As Expressed in the Practice of Teaching.. 10

Toward a Teacher's Dilemma of Teaching: Understanding What It Means to Be a Teacher................. 13

Toward a Reflection: Teacher As a Reflective Practioner.. 18

III. NARRATIVE INQUIRY AS A RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.. 24

What Is Narrative Inquiry?... 24

The Importance of Narrative in My Personal Life... 26

Telling and Retelling Our Stories of Lives...................... 27

Brief Overview of the Study....................................... 30

Coming to Know Carol and Michael........................ 30

Sharing Our Teaching Stories................................ 32

        - Participant observation.................................... 32
        - Conversations.. 35
        - Journals.. 36
    - Constructing and Reconstructing Our Stories............. 37
  - Ethical Considerations... 37
  - Summary.. 37

IV. CAROL'S STORY.. 38

  - Early Experiences in Carol's Life................................ 40
  - Meeting Carol, the Teacher.. 44
    - Picture One.. 45
    - Picture Two.. 46
    - Picture Three.. 49
    - Picture Four.. 49
  - Conducting a Pilot Study... 50
  - Beginning to Work with Carol..................................... 56
    - The First Day of My Research................................. 57
    - My Journey to St. Peter's School............................ 58
    - The School, the Teacher, and the Children................. 60
      - Circle activity.. 61
  - Coming to Understand Carol's Teaching Dilemmas............ 62

V. MICHAEL'S STORY 98

Getting to Know Michael 99

My Research Journey Begins: Who Am I in the Classroom? 101

The First Day in Michael's Classroom 103

Circle activity 104

Falling into Education 106

Coming to Understand Michael's Dilemmas 114

Dilemma #1 Life on a "Choosing Board" 114

Dilemma #2 The Experience of Time in the Reality of Teaching 122

Dilemma #3 Finding Our Places in the Classroom 130

Dilemma #4 Learning About the Realities 136

Dilemma #5 Living with Two Realities 148

Nested Dilemmas 158

VI. A STORY OF MYSELF AS A RESEARCHER 163

Who Am I in the Research? 165

My Relationship with Carol 171

My Relationship with Michael................................ 190

Summary.. 200

VII. DILEMMAS IN TEACHING.................................... 202

Dilemma: What Is Dilemma?...................................... 204

Teaching: What Is Teaching?..................................... 205

How Did My Dilemma
Arise?: Dilemma As a Matter of
One's Personal History and Philosophy..................... 206

What Was My Process of Managing
Dilemmas?: Dilemmas As an Argument
with One's Self.. 207

How Do I Manage My Dilemma?: Personal
Strategies As an Instrument to Manage the
Unsolvable Problem... 209

Reflecting on Two Teachers' Stories............................ 211

Carol's Story: How Did Carol Manage Her
Teaching Dilemmas?.. 211

Conflicts over a philosophy as one source
of the dilemmas of teaching.............................. 212

Reflection on the web of self and the
realities of the situation as one way

to manage an unsolvable dilemma 213

An ongoing dilemma 216

A sword with two blades as one
kind of dilemma of teaching 219

The uncertainty of life as a
dilemma of teaching 226

Michael's Story: How Did Michael Manage
His Teaching Dilemmas? 233

Life on a "choosing board" 234

The experience of time in the
reality of teaching 245

VIII. DEATH AND REBIRTH IN NARRATIVES 258

Re-visiting the Research Topic 262

Re-visiting the Research Methodology:
Anonymity or Visibility 264

Re-visiting the Research Experiences 265

What Helped Us in Handling Our Teaching
Dilemmas 270

POSTSCRIPT: THE NEW BEGINNING 277

REFERENCES 280

Chapter I

Narrative Beginnings

> For men at first had eyes but saw to no purpose; they had ears but did not hear. Like the shapes of dreams they dragged through their long lives and handled all things in bewilderment and confusion. (Aeschylus cited in Greene, 1973, p. 27)

The need to do this research study originates in my experience a long time ago when I was a teacher in a kindergarten in Thailand. I remember my first day of teaching. I was both excited and scared at the same time. "Are the people in the school nice? What am I going to teach? Do I really know how to teach? Are the children good?" These questions were in my mind as I drove to the school on that early morning of July 1, 1985.

When I got to the school, I went to see the principal. "She seems nice but a little bit strange," I told myself. She did not tell me anything about the school. She assigned me to work with one of the teachers in the school. The teacher to whom I was assigned was very quiet. I was surprised and very frustrated because she did not tell me what I was to do. I did not know what my role was in her classroom.

"What am I supposed to do in this classroom? Why did the principal put me into this classroom? Am I a real teacher or a helper? Am I going to have my own classroom or will I have to stay with her for a whole year? How can I teach like this teacher? Am I supposed to teach as she does?" All these questions came to my mind while I watched her teach. Finally she asked me to tell a story to the children. While telling the story to the students, I was again both excited and scared. "How am I doing? What is she going to tell the principal about my teaching? Can I be a teacher?" These were the questions I asked myself over and over after I told the story.

I felt more pressure at lunchtime. It was a strange lunch break since nobody talked to me. They talked to each other. That afternoon the vice-principal introduced me to other teachers in the school. "There are a lot of teachers in the school. How can I remember all of them?" I asked myself. While I walked back to the classroom, I saw the children walk in line with their teachers. In that way, I found out the school was dismissed at 3:30 p.m. The vice-principal told me I was supposed to reach the school before 8:00 a.m. and stay in the school until 3:30 p.m. Also, each teacher had to stay at the school until 5 p.m. twice a month to look after the children in a waiting room. That was my first day of teaching.

When I look back on my experiences of teaching, I always feel that the first year of teaching was better than the following years even though in that first year I struggled to learn about the school culture. In the second week of my first year, the principal told me to move to my own classroom where I would be the teacher. Like most beginning teachers, I had my own image of what good teaching should be. During that year, I had a lot of energy to create new things for my students. I went to school early in the morning and came home late because I prepared many teaching resources. I taught my students the way I taught during my practicum. In my practicum I had been allowed a lot of freedom to do what I wanted. I let the children spend a lot of time playing in the role-play area, the book area, and the block area. My image of teaching young children was not one of having them learn to read, write, and calculate. When one of the teachers in the school came and asked me whether I taught my students to add numbers, I asked her to tell me how to teach young children to add numbers. However, at the time I felt it was not necessary for me to teach my students to learn to read, write, and calculate. I had learned in many university courses that children of this age were not ready to learn these things.

I continued teaching my own way. I enjoyed reading stories to my students. I was surprised to see how excited they became when I said I had a story to tell them. When listening to the stories, the children were very quiet and seemed to be very involved in the story I was telling. After I read a story to my students, they always went back to the story corner and looked at the pictures with their friends. I was amazed to find that my students related the stories to their life experiences. They incorporated the stories into their play activities and conversations. I still remember when a little boy told his friends to be careful when playing on the slide because they could break their arms like a teddy bear in the story.

When the results of the exam came out at the end of the school year, the average marks of my students were in the lowest rank of the school. Moreover, most of them did not pass the entrance exam to the first grade in the famous schools. When they went to the first grade, their parents told me their children were advanced in social development but were punished by their first grade teachers because they talked during their studies. I began to think that I should concentrate my teaching more on helping my students to learn to read, write, and calculate as other teachers in the school had done. I started to look at the reality of the school environment and began to feel that teaching was like an academic game. If I knew the rules to play the game, I could win without worrying about the exams. In the following years, I changed my style of teaching and began to drill my students more to do well on the exams.

Not surprisingly when I began to do this, I felt my teaching was boring. It seemed routine. I often got tired of my own teaching and sometimes taught as if I was a machine. I did not think about what I was doing and why I was doing it. My teaching seemed like an end in itself. I knew what my teaching was going to be beforehand. For example, in the circle activity, after I wrote the date of the day on the board, I let the children read the date. After that I marked the register. I then gave the children opportunities to talk in front of the class for ten minutes. Though I felt that it was very important to let my students tell stories about the events in their lives, I could not spend most of the time on this activity since the children needed to learn to read and write. Then I let them read word cards of previously learned words. I brought word cards to play games with them. At first, the children loved playing the word game. However, when they had to play again and again, they began to get bored. I, also, began to get tired of playing the word game with my students because the same thing happened over and over. I began a new lesson by reading a story to them and tried to relate the story to the unit I had to teach. Then, I taught them about two new words, for example, "pork," and "chicken." I used phonic skills to help them pronounce the words. I helped them practice making up the sentences by using the words they had learned before and the new words. I gave an example for them, "I buy pork." Then the children could make, "Dad buys chicken" or other sentences. After that I explained three different kinds of worksheets, one educational game, and an art activity.

For both my students and me, the circle activity was boring especially for children in the second year of the kindergarten. My students did not want to learn and I did not enjoy my teaching because nothing made sense to either the children or to me. The activities were the same every day. I was upset when the children played or talked during my teaching. I wanted them to pay attention to the new words since they had to take both a school exam and an entrance exam to go on to the first grade in other schools. Therefore, I punished them when they did not pay attention to the lesson. The punishment was being sent to another classroom for a while. My students were afraid of being sent to another classroom so the rest of them paid more attention to the lesson. To me, teaching was not an adventure anymore. My teaching was a means to an end. I felt that I did not live the way I taught. Teaching was something separate from myself. During these years I struggled to find ways to get out of teaching.

When I had an opportunity to continue my studies, I was very glad since I thought I could get out of a boring activity for a while. But I also thought I might end up with a new understanding of what teaching was and find a way to get out of the routine into which I had fallen. I was struggling to find out what teaching was when I observed a teacher in Canada. I was very impressed by how energetic she was in her teaching. Her teaching was totally different from my teaching. It was not routine since most things came from the children. The teacher told me she had in her mind a tentative plan about what she was going to teach but she did not know when it would happen since so much came from the children. She seemed to know what she was doing and why she was doing what she was doing. She was aware of herself as a teacher. When I had conversations with her, I found she could articulate what she called her "philosophy." I found that her practice of teaching went together with her philosophy.

Through listening to the teacher talk about her philosophy of education, I began to question myself, "What is my philosophy of education?," "Do I have a philosophy?" I was not quite sure whether I had a philosophy or not until I took a class in autobiography during the summer of 1990. After writing my own biography, I found that I also had a strong philosophy, but I was not aware of it while I was teaching. Maybe that was why I always got lost in my own teaching. When I was faced with dilemmas, I did not know what I should do. As a result, my teaching was dominated by the philosophies of others (parents, first grade teachers, principal, and other teachers in the school). When I did what they wanted, my teaching was dull and uninteresting.

Since my responsibility in the future will be teaching in a teacher's college and working with kindergarten teachers in the college demonstration school, I wanted to do my research with experienced teachers. I have my own memories of what teaching was like for me as an experienced teacher, and I have listened as others shared their experiences of teaching. This has led me to ask, "What dilemmas do teachers of young children encounter? Are these teachers aware of their educational philosophies and their practice of teaching? If they are, does it help them find a better way to live with their dilemmas?" By doing this research study, I hope it will help the teachers with whom I work, and myself, find a better way to live with the dilemmas of teaching and to offer new understandings about the connections between teachers' philosophies and the dilemmas in practice.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

> Philosophy is thinking what the known demands of us-what responsive attitude it exacts. It is an idea of what is possible, not a record of accomplished fact. (Dewey, 1963, p. 326)

My past experiences as a kindergarten teacher led me to conduct this research study. In this chapter, I review the literature to set the framework for the study. This chapter was composed before I began the research journey with the teachers. Additional literature was integrated as the teachers and I worked together. I wanted to leave the framework for the literature review untouched because it was this framework that bounded, in part, the collaborative journey.

In this chapter, I write about how a teacher's philosophy developed, how it expressed itself in the practice of teaching, and what happened when a teacher found out that his/her philosophy did not go together with his/her practice. In addition I illustrate how reflection is a way to help a teacher manage his/her teaching dilemmas.

Toward a Teacher's Philosophy

> He who philosophizes is like a mirror that reflects objects that cannot see, like a cave that returns the echo of voices that it does not hear. (Gibran, 1962)

The word "philosophy" has its root in the Latin "philosophia," in the Greek "phil," love + "sophia," wisdom. The root meaning of the term "philosophy" is "love of wisdom." According to Greene (1973), to pursue wisdom, to "love" it, is "to break with earthly things and time and change, to yearn upward, toward the unearthly Ideal" (p. 28). Since the term "philosophy" is complex, abstract, and highly theoretical, it conveys a sense that makes most of us think that philosophy is for "scholars who are only in tenuous touch with the world of practical affairs" (Zais, 1976, p. 103). According to

Needleman (1982), in the past the word "philosopher" might remind us to think of people who have strange ideas. To scientists, philosophers were regarded as "metaphysicians" or those who worried about matters beyond rational verification. On the other hand, to people in the fields of art, philosophers were merely "logic choppers." Now, however, philosophers range from the ordinary person who thinks a little bit about what he/she feels is significant, to the philosophical purist who deals with abstract theory, meanings and shadings of meanings, and uses a vocabulary which only he/she and a few of contemporaries understand (Marshall, 1973). The word "philosophy" is evoked in every profession. This is especially so for teaching.

If we think about our educational system, many philosophical questions emerge such as what is teaching, and what is learning. John Dewey, in his book Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education, treated philosophy as an activity, a way of thinking about what was known and valued rather than as a body of doctrines or truths. Knight (1982) confirms that each teacher has a philosophy of life that he/she carries into the classroom. For example, we have convictions about the world, the meaning of life, and what is ethically right. Furthermore, we have a philosophy of education with which we operate every day. Greene (1973) defines philosophy as "a way of framing distinctive sorts of questions having to do with what is presupposed, perceived, intuited, believed, and known" (p. 7). It is a way of contemplating, examining, or thinking about what is taken to be significant, valuable, beautiful, worthy of commitment. It is a way of becoming self-aware, of constituting meanings in one's life-world. The philosophical system, as Dewey (1963) said, "bring to explicit consciousness what men have come to think, in virtue of the quality of their current experience, about nature, themselves, and the reality they conceive" (p. 324). For Dewey, the value of philosophy was not in furnishing solutions but in defining difficulties and suggesting methods for dealing with them. According to Marshall (1973), philosophy is "man's" endeavor to make an articulate and logical appraisal about the meaning, value, and continuity of life.

There is now ongoing research in the area of teachers' philosophy. Russell (1987) indicates that teachers' awareness of how they begin to teach and of how their professional knowledge continues to develop helps them free themselves from the potential conflict of the "theory into practice" image of learning. Diane, an experienced teacher in Russell's study, found it was very important for teachers to develop their personal philosophies. She points out that

> So I don't know whether I really changed. I just found more--I felt better about the things I was doing and--you know because they suited what I had studied about Reading or Math and they went along with my philosophy of learning, you know, what I call "easy learning." Let the child lead you. And if he's not happy, then you're doing something wrong. You're getting in his way or you're going too fast or something like that. I don't think children are lazy. And they won't fight you if you can just find their path--almost all of them. Everything sort of--when it matched my philosophy, the type of instruction, I kept on with it and I gradually even now I eliminate things that I am not comfortable with. (p. 6)

Russell's study suggests that for teachers like Diane it is important for them to understand their philosophies in order to improve their teaching practice. Other educators, such as Mackwood (1991), also suggests that to improve our teaching we should clearly define our teaching philosophy.

In this study, philosophy refers to an awareness of self. It is what we, as teachers, respond with when someone questions us regarding our beliefs about children, teaching, learning, and subject matter. It is similar to our image of teaching, that is, what we believe good teaching should be. Philosophy is unique to each individual. Sometimes it might be difficult for teachers to articulate their philosophy of education since we know more than we can tell (Polanyi, 1966). However, it is only in articulation that teachers become fully aware of themselves (Anning, 1986). Through trying to articulate their philosophies, they are explicit about what they do and why they do it. In other words, philosophy is the way one thinks about oneself in teaching situations (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988b). Our philosophy is also apparent in our actions in the classroom. It includes the idea of both beliefs and values. However, in this study philosophy goes deeper than the concept of both beliefs and values to our knowing as it finds expression in our practice of teaching. Our philosophy is an integral part of who we are and everything we do.

What is important to note, however, is that sometimes teachers can be pressured into practices that are not part of their philosophies. This dilemma is now the one I see I experienced as I sought to please my principal, other teachers, and parents.

Toward a Teacher's Philosophy as Expressed in the Practice of Teaching

According to Needleman (1982), we cannot live without philosophy. Our philosophy stays with us all the time like a shadow of our lives. We unconsciously "adopt" a philosophy of life by "osmosis" from family, school, peer group, religion, and other components of our cultures (Zais, 1976). No matter what we accept uncritically as right or wrong, what we feel most deeply concerned about, what we spend time and effort in securing for ourselves, these values shape our view of life. If we look back at our teaching and then think carefully about it, we might find that many things we do, and the way we teach our students, are influenced by our past experiences, the theories we believe in, and the people we have met during our lifetime (McConaghy, 1990). As beginning teachers, we begin our teaching careers with our images about what it takes to be a good teacher. These images are formed from our experiences when we were children in schools, or later on when we were students in teacher education programs. During that time we expect that our images of good teaching will transfer directly and unproblematically to our practices. As our experiences accumulate, we begin to be aware that our images of good teaching are continually shaped by our own actions, the context in which we work, and our past and present experiences. Research on teacher thinking, as Clark (1988) points out, has documented the fact that teachers develop and hold implicit theories about their students, the subject matter they teach, their roles and responsibilities, and how they should teach. These implicit theories influence their teaching and their response to new ideas. Teachers' implicit theories tend to come together from many sources such as personal experience, beliefs, values, biases, and prejudices (Clark, 1988). The connections between teachers' implicit theories and their practice provide a way to explain the differences in their behaviors and decision making.

Clark (1988) does not make references to our personal philosophies but what he says is close to how philosophy is defined by Connelly and Clandinin (1988b). Connelly and Clandinin (1988b) use the term "personal practical knowledge" to refer to the knowing that is in our past experience, our present mind and body, and our future plans and actions. Personal philosophy is part of personal practical knowledge and is found both in our action and mind. As teachers, what we practice in the classroom cannot be separated from our attitudes about the purposes of education, the role of the teacher, ideas about life, and our beliefs about people as learners (Morris, 1961; Marshall, 1973; Morris & Young, 1976; Combs, 1979; Dobson & Dobson, 1983). Our teaching reflects our view of education or our images of what teaching and learning should be like for our students. It is also influenced by our view of what it means to be human. What teachers do in their classrooms flows from who they are (Aoki, 1991). The decisions they make and their judgements are grounded in their beliefs about teaching and learning and are influenced by the context of the classroom (Elmore, 1982; Clark & Peterson, 1986; O'Brien & Norton, 1991). Fenstermacher (1986) asserts that teachers will not change their practice of teaching if a new practice means a complete overthrow of their beliefs about the nature of teaching. In other words, teachers can adapt their teaching to the new practice if the beliefs that underlie the new practice are still their own major beliefs. Teachers cannot overthrow their own philosophy completely. If they do that, they will lose their own identity of self.

Wolcott (1977) gives an example of a situation in one school district that tried to implement a new planning, programming, and budgeting system. However, the policy of the new system failed since it was not compatible with the teachers' beliefs. Teachers found that implementing the new system took time and energy away from the instructional tasks they believed should be their first priority. As the implementation continued and their complaints went unheeded, teacher resistance to the program grew. Holt and Johnston (1989) have studied the influence of the M.Ed. program on the educational philosophies and practices of two experienced teachers. The result of their study indicated that the educational philosophy of teachers directly influenced their responses to their graduate program. Therefore, when a teacher's educational philosophy and a program philosophy differ, it is important for teacher educators to accept and respect the differences and try to encourage the teachers to continue to study their educational philosophy, their teaching, and the congruence between the two instead of imposing particular ideas or practices. Our actions, as Knight (1982) pointed out, "are rooted in our philosophy" (p. 127).

In the same way, teachers develop, through their actions, interrelated sets of beliefs and practices about matters such as how children learn, and what they should learn (McCutcheon & Jung, 1990). According to O'Brien and Norton (1991), these beliefs are sometimes discussed as "intuition" or "common sense," and teachers are unable to account for where or how they got these beliefs, although their training and classroom experience seem to play a part in this "intuition." These interrelated sets of beliefs and practices constitute their philosophies of education which differ from person to person since their experiences differ as do their contexts, their students, and the subject matter they teach.

Cornett (1990) points out that

> Of course, my beliefs about teaching have been heavily influenced by my actual teaching experience. This has included 10 years as a secondary social studies and English teacher, 3 years as an undergraduate education instructor while a graduate student, and 3 years as a professor. (p.185)

The result of the study done by O'Brien and Norton (1991) showed that theory and strategies which the teachers learned in their classrooms influenced the way they taught their students. When the theory and/or strategies were validated by successful classroom experiences and student response, they were adopted into the teacher's repertoire. According to Knight (1982), the constructing of a personal philosophy for both life and education is a continuing process of thought and practice that becomes richer, deeper, and more meaningful as we develop professionally.

Philosophy can be changed and be modified as one acts in teaching. In school environments teachers might find that there is a conflict between their philosophy and the schools' and society's expectations. Teachers may always be in the process of re-examining their philosophy through their teaching and their teaching through their philosophy.

Toward a Teacher's Dilemma of Teaching: Understanding What It Means to Be a Teacher

> For the first time a young teacher enters a class independently, no longer sent by the training college to prove his efficiency. The class before him is like a mirror of mankind, so multiform, so full of contradictions, so inaccessible. (Buber, 1965, p. 112)

When I began teaching, I had few ideas about what teaching was like in schools. Even though I had completed two months of practice teaching in a private school, I did not feel I was a "real" teacher. I began my teaching career with a lot of energy and the dreams of trying to transfer my own image of good teaching to my classroom practices. It was not until I began to teach that I became aware that my teaching was shaped not only by my own image of teaching, but by the context, both inside and outside of the school. Within the school environment, I had to cope with the students in my classroom, fellow teachers, the principal, the mandated curriculum, the school's philosophy, the school's budget, and the parents. As well, my image of teaching had been tacitly constructed through my life experiences, including my experience of the educational system as a child and an adult. I continued to be influenced by society's expectations.

I remember that while I was teaching, I was sometimes very frustrated because I could not do what I wanted to do. There were many voices demanding me to do different things to my students. Most of the parents wanted me to push their children to learn to read and write. The principal and a group of faculty who planned the curriculum of the school expected me to emphasize readiness more than reading and writing. The school exams, however, dealt mostly with reading, writing, and spelling. I sometimes felt overwhelmed and began to act like a machine, trying to please all of the people around me. Greene (1973) indicates there are four different ways for teachers who feel overwhelmed by a discordant clamor of voices to act in their teaching. At one extreme, the voices thrust the teachers back into "reliance on precedent; defensively, the teachers may become an automaton" (p. 183). This was the extreme I chose. At the other extreme, the voices may cause the teachers to feel deep "disquietude." The teachers may realize, as never before, that they are responsible for their moral choices, that "with dissonance afflicting them and no one to turn to for a resolution--they are dreadfully free" (p. 183). Or more moderately, the teachers may decide to follow the behavioral scientists with the hope that their theories will give them a sense of direction. Or they may decide, as Carl Bereiter (cited in Green, 1973) said, that the school is no place for humanistic teaching or face-to-face encounters, no place for the pursuit of values, and that they will concentrate on teaching skills.

However, when I reflected on my own experiences of teaching, I realized that I needed to find a better way to live with the problems instead of acting like a machine. I began to understand what teaching is really like in schools. I felt that teaching by its own nature is complex, uncertain and full of dilemmas (Liberman & Miller, 1978; Clark, 1988; Lyons, 1990, Butt, in press).

The word "dilemma" has its root in the Latin "dilemmat" and in the Greek "di," two + "limma," assumption. The root meaning of the term "dilemma" is "two assumptions." From Funk and Wagnalis's Canadian College Dictionary (1989), dilemma means an argument that presents antagonists with two (or more) alternatives, but is equally conclusive against them, whichever alternative they choose. However, dilemma has been used in different ways by researchers and educators.

Berlak and Berlak (1981) define "dilemma" as "a language of acts, a means of representing in language the diverse and apparently contradictory patterns of schooling" (p. 133). From their observations of teachers in the schools in England for six months, Berlak and Berlak found sixteen dilemmas which they divided into three sets: "control," "curriculum" and "societal." The sixteen dilemmas are intended to serve as a language for describing teachers' actions in schools. The dilemmas are intended to represent the range of tensions in teachers, the situation, and society. One dilemma, for example, is teacher control of time versus child control of time. This dilemma captures the pull, on the one hand, toward teachers controlling when children will begin activities and the duration of the activity and, on the other hand, towards allowing children to control their own time. However, since teachers may resolve each of the dilemmas differently for different children, at different times, and for different subjects, the pattern of resolution at any one time may not be represented as teacher or child control but as transformational which means that neither the child nor the teacher can be said to be controlling the situation.

In the conclusion of their research study, Berlak and Berlak (1981) refer to dilemma as a contradiction which can be solved by teachers. Teachers are assumed to make choices among dichotomous alternatives. This finding was similar to that of Butt (in press). In his study, Butt used biographical, autobiographical, and case study methodologies in an attempt to understand the way in which teachers experienced and authored their own working realities. In the study, he found many paradoxes and dilemmas in teaching, including for example, the subject-centered versus the child-centered approach. Butt points out that

> A teacher, faced with dilemmas and contradictions, must simplify and resolve them, or at least achieve sufficient resolution for adequate personal comfort. I suspect that many teachers do not, hence the stress attached to the job remains high. (p. 6)

However, there are some researchers and educators, such as Lampert (1985) and Lyons (1990), who do not agree with this point of view.

According to Lampert (1985), dilemmas arise because teachers try to solve many pedagogical problems. Lampert views dilemma as an argument with self. Teachers cannot win by choosing. Even though some teachers do resolve their dilemmas, for example, by choosing between pushing students to achieve and providing a comfortable learning environment, or between covering the curriculum and attending to individual understanding, Lampert argues that "choosing is not the only way to manage in the face of self-contradictory alternatives" (p.182). In her view, teachers could manage their own dilemmas not by solving them but by putting the problems that led to them into the background and bringing other parts of their jobs to the foreground. Even though in this way teachers' problems still remain, the teachers themselves construct a strategy to live with their dilemmas without erupting into more serious, distracting discord. Lampert's image of the teacher is "an active negotiator, a broker of sorts, balancing a variety of interests that need to be satisfied in classrooms" (p. 190).

Like Lampert (1985), Lyons (1990) refers to dilemma as the ethical dimensions of teachers' practical conflicts. The conflicts have multiple perspectives and contradictions and are not easily dichotomized. From her study with forty-six teachers, she found that fifty-two percent of the teachers said their dilemmas were ongoing, and a majority indicated that their dilemma was likely to recur. Therefore, in Lyons's view, many dilemmas of teaching are not solvable and must simply be managed rather than resolved. From her point of view, dilemmas cannot easily be dealt with by the choice of one principle over the other, but rather demand deliberation, attention to detail, and new kinds of creative resolutions, ones that attend to all elements as well as the people involved.

In the study, dilemmas are seen to create both internal conflicts within the teacher and external conflicts between the teacher and the environment. While teachers try to solve classroom problems, they work at coping with their own internal conflicts at the same time. They argue with themselves about what to do with the particular classroom problems instead of screening out responsibilities that contradict one another. For example, when a teacher who believes in a child-centered approach is aware that an approach does not work with some of the students in the classroom, she or he is inclined to think about what should be done about the particular problem rather than thinking about using a teacher-centered approach. We cannot define which kind of dilemma will arise in classrooms beforehand since each teacher is as different as his/her students and the context of the classroom. Each of them brings life experiences which affect the way they frame classroom situations into dilemmas and how to manage them. In this research study, dilemma is viewed both as a contradiction which can be resolved and cannot be resolved by teachers. Some teachers might push to solve their dilemmas by choosing between two choices. However, choosing is not the only way to manage dilemma. Other teachers try to find a better way to live along with them.

Toward a Reflection: Teacher As a Reflective Practitioner

> You cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him to find it within himself. (Galileo cited in Brimfield, Roderick, & Yamamoto, 1983)

Most of the dilemmas of teaching involve a teacher's internal conflicts. Therefore, is it possible for the teacher to be a resource in managing the problems of educational practice? As I reflected on this question, I was reminded of my own life as a child in Thailand.

Every time I thought about my childhood experiences, the picture of my brother and me playing in the sand with our friends always came to my mind. I still remembered during that time we were young enough to enjoy creating and building objects with sand and water according to our imaginations. Sometimes we used wood to help us create things . We also brought insects such as beetles, grasshoppers, and black ants to play in the sand. Our place in the sand was not a beautiful place but it had a lot of sand. It was big enough to allow six children to play without arguing with each other. When I was playing in that place, it seemed as if I was playing at the beach. There was a big tree near by which made it cool enough for us to play for a half day without getting hot. The place was close to a garage of the school. It was a happy place for me because when I was there, I did not feel the sadness of missing my parents. Even now I still love that place and still, when I think of it, I feel happy. There were no interruptions, no adults, and no rules in that place. We had something to play with which was more fun than all the toys the school provided for us. We could do whatever we wanted. We could play with other people if we wanted or we could play alone. That place was full of freedom. I could spend hours and hours in that place without getting bored. I stayed there all afternoon on *my weekends. We all knew we were happy. It was like a little "kingdom" for us children.*

Within that fragment of my personal biography lie the roots of my image of teaching and learning in school. In my teaching experiences, I loved watching my students playing in the playground. At the playground, the children could play whatever they wanted. Some might play on the swings, some on a jungle gym, some in a sand box, some would run around, and some would sit and talk to me. If the children had problems, I might help them, but sometimes I let them solve their problems by themselves. I always felt my students learned more on the playground than when they were in the classroom. They experienced a variety of things by themselves. They could learn what they wanted without my interruptions or my pushing. Even though in my last two years of teaching I had to push my students to learn to read, write, and calculate, I always gave them time to play in the playground every day.

This is part of my image of teaching and learning. The image is a playing out of my past experiences as a child in an elementary school in Thailand. My image is personal and distinct from every other. It reflects who I am, the ways in which I came to be that way, and what I wish to do in the future. The process of writing this story helps me to understand myself and the ways I re-interpret the external constraints to be compatible with my past experiences and my educational philosophy. It helps me see how I manage my dilemmas of teaching. At the same time I begin to realize how important it is for me to take a half step backward from my life to reflect on my thought and action in order to put bits and pieces of my life together and make meaning from it (Calkins & Harwayne, 1991).

I believe that teachers who have taught for a number of years can process their own teaching without having to think about their actions. The experienced teachers hold a kind of knowledge which Connelly and Clandinin (1988b) call "personal practical knowledge," a knowledge which Polanyi (1966) terms "tacit knowledge." This knowledge is shaped by teachers' experiences, their actions in the classrooms, their beliefs, and by the contexts in which they live and work (Clandinin, 1986). Schon (1987) refers to this knowledge as "knowing-in-action." He points out that "our spontaneous knowing-in-action usually gets us through the day" (p. 26). However, when teachers experience an unexpected situation or a situation that Schon (1987) calls a "surprise," the teachers may "rethink" their "knowing-in-action" or respond to the surprise by "brushing it aside." If teachers choose to rethink their knowing-in-action, they can do it in one of two ways. They may "reflect-on-action" by thinking back on what they have done in order to discover how their knowing-in-action has contributed to an unexpected outcome. Or they may reflect in the midst of action without interrupting it, a process Schon calls "reflection-in-action."

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) refer to "knowing-in-action" as "constructed knowledge." In their study of 135 women, they found that the women who learned to speak in a unique and authentic voice intentionally took time out to get to know the self and to reflect on the context that confined and defined them. They engaged in "reflection-on-action." By reflecting on the self and their contexts, these women recognized the inevitability of conflict and stress and learned to live with them. They integrated knowledge that they felt intuitively was personally important with knowledge they had learned from others.

Some educators such as Greene (1973) and Dobson and Dobson (1983) refer to the term "reflection on action" as "doing philosophy." Dobson and Dobson point out that in order to do educational philosophy, teachers need time to reflect on what they are doing and they also require time to dialogue with others. Greene suggests that to do educational philosophy should be a continual part of the process of being a teacher since it may help teachers liberate themselves for understanding and choosing. Teachers can no longer simply accept what is transmitted by "experts" and feel they are equipped to interpret the world. Greene maintains that by doing philosophy, teachers are aware of who they are "as a historical being, acting on his freedom, trying each day to be" (p. 7).

How often do we as experienced teachers reflect on what we are doing, or give ourselves time to think seriously about our actions in the classrooms? Van Manen (1986) points out that one of the reasons for teacher burnout is not necessarily a symptom of excessive effort or of being overworked. It is the condition of not knowing why we are doing what we are doing. Teachers need to consider and re-consider the value of what they are trying to do in their classrooms, especially with children whose lived experience is markedly different from their own. Why do we think it is appropriate to separate children from their own background experiences in order to mold them into the model which we conceive to be personhood? By thinking about our teaching, we will be more aware about our actions in the classrooms and begin to listen to ourselves. It seems to me that to think is to question, to inquire, to find out for ourselves, and to hold an idea long enough to unlock and shape its power (Krishnamurti, 1963; John-Steiner, 1985). Teachers should be always inquiring, always uncertain, always looking, searching, and finding out about what they are doing. In order to know what they want to do next, teachers need not only to ponder the purpose of what they do, but they also need to take time to reflect on themselves and their relationship to the world.

The root meaning of the term "reflection" is "to bend or fold back." It always reminds me of the process that starts in the moment and reaches back to the past. In order to engage in reflection on our actions, we need to stop and think. Even though it interrupts our ordinary activities, it is necessary for the development of a sense of potency--"of vital being in the world" (Greene, 1984, p. 35). Greene (1984) confirms my understanding about "reflection." She points out that

> To reach back, even for a moment, into our life stories may be to find the sources of our craft. Also, it may enable us to regain an awareness of what it actually means to be enabled to learn, to reach beyond where one is. (p. 58)

If we look back at our past experience, both as children and student teachers, we might find that our teaching is shaped by our past experience. A research study done by Raymond, Butt, and Townsend (1989) supports my understanding. In their research project, Raymond, Butt, and Townsend use teachers' autobiographies to understand the nature of teachers' knowledge and development. The result of their study, from detailed case studies of three teachers' life stories and a collection of over eighty others, indicates that teachers' professional identities and their actions in the classrooms are influenced by their early personal experiences and school experiences. For instance, Lloyd, an experienced teacher in the study, locates the main sources of his pedagogy in his family's basic values, in his experience of cultural deprivation, and in his own experience as a student. He points out that

> Since I learned most of my skills, it seems, from Mrs. Hunt (his grade five teacher whom he calls his "white mother"), I still can remember some of her strategies, many of which were of the rote memory type of activities. This had led me to believe that with students who are unable to conceptualize data (such as I was in those days) the use of a similar approach is effective. I try to use it with my modified students and it seems to be working. (p. 4)

However, if we want to improve our own teaching and get out of routine behavior, we need to take time to examine our own biographies and philosophies, and, also , of our craft. As a result, we will be aware that our ways of knowing, thinking, and doing flow from who we are (Aoki, 1991). It, also, will provide us a fundamental base for the re-interpretation of external constraints to reflect our own beliefs and the contexts of our classrooms (Raymond, Butt, & Townsend, 1989).

Newman (1987) points out that teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching are largely tacit. Teachers operate much of the time from an intuitive sense of what is going on without actively reflecting on what their intentions might be and what their actions could be saying to students. If teachers want to change what they do in the classrooms in any meaningful way, which involves changing their attitudes and beliefs, they need to be aware of what they are doing and why they are doing what they are doing. Therefore, teachers need to reflect continuously on their beliefs, their behaviors, and their goals; that is, what they do and why they do what they do. They need to assess and re-assess their philosophies over time.

Chapter III

Narrative Inquiry As a Research Methodology

> Understanding human experience is the central task of the educational researcher. For it is in the stories of everyday lives, the drama, the meanings, the metaphors others live by, that the human science researcher must practice his or her craft of telling. (Polakow, 1985, p. 826)

This research study was created from my own experiences as a teacher of young children and my attempt to understand other teachers' experiences of teaching. I wanted to know the dilemmas that teachers of young children encountered and how they used their educational philosophies to help them manage their teaching dilemmas. I wanted to delve into their teaching experiences by listening to their stories and exploring how they constructed their realities, and gave meaning to their everyday lives. In the research process of telling their teaching stories, teachers would have opportunities to reflect on their teaching experiences and through the process, find ways to manage their dilemmas. Narrative inquiry was the appropriate research methodology for the study. The selection was based, not on any academic preference, but on the nature of the study itself.

In this chapter, I will explore what narrative inquiry is and the process of using narrative inquiry in the study.

What Is Narrative Inquiry?

"What is narrative inquiry?" was the question I asked myself when I first heard the word "narrative inquiry" three years ago. In one of our graduate seminars, a friend mentioned the word "narrative inquiry." I had no idea of what narrative inquiry was. Our class invited a guest speaker, Dr. Jean Clandinin, to talk about narrative.

As I listened to Dr. Jean Clandinin's talk, I was both confused and curious. I remember thinking that narrative inquiry was an interesting method because it drew upon the power of stories. Stories had affected me as a young child. However, I did not understand how stories could become an educational research methodology. It seemed impossible to me because stories were plain, soft, and close to my skin. It was easy for me to tell and write stories of my life. I did not think that stories would count in educational research. They did not seem to constitute the "real" data (Polakow, 1985).

During the spring of that year, I undertook an independent study with Dr. Jean Clandinin and worked on my research proposal. Jean asked me to write many stories about my teaching and life which I felt comfortable in doing. Through the process of retelling my life story, I found that it was helpful because it gave me an opportunity to reflect on my teaching and to gain control over my life. I began to see the possibility of using stories as a tool for conducting research on myself and as a methodology for my research study. However, I still did not have a clear picture of what the word "narrative" meant and how it connected to the word "story." As I went on with my research journey, I developed a clearer picture of how story connected with narrative.

The word "narrative, to narrate," has its root in the Latin gnoscere, noscere "to know." Therefore, to narrate is to tell something in narrative or story form (Van Manen, 1990). According to McIntyre (1981), humans are essentially storytelling animals. This means that we, by our own nature, lead storied lives and tell stories of our lives all the time (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). We tell stories for many reasons, for example, to entertain, to gossip, or to reveal who we are. My reading of Connelly and Clandinin (1990) helped me understand the meanings of both the words "narrative" and "story" more clearly. They wrote,

> Narrative names the structured quality of experience to be studied, and it names the patterns of inquiry for its study. (p. 2)

Connelly and Clandinin use the term "story" to refer to the phenomenon and the term "narrative" to refer to the inquiry. This reminded me of a jigsaw puzzle metaphor. I saw stories as anecdotes or puzzles and narrative as a whole picture of the jigsaw puzzle or a whole story. Therefore, it seems to me that narrative inquiry provides both the stories or the experiences and the method to construct and reconstruct those experiences.

The Importance of Narrative in My Personal Life

I remembered going out for supper with a group of elders one night. As we were waiting for our meals, we began to talk about a conference on storytelling. An 86-year-old woman said, "I find that as I get older, I love to listen to stories more than anything else." Having heard what her friend said, another woman began to tell a story about her beloved teacher in grade seven, thirty years before. She said that she was very impressed with her history teacher because the teacher knew how to make history come alive through storytelling. This woman was quite sad, however, when she heard her own children complain about how boring their history lessons were.

As I listened to a group of elders discuss the power of story in their lives, I saw a picture of myself as a small child begging my aunt to tell me a story every single night. I wanted her to tell me more and more stories so that I could imagine the world outside of my reach. My 82-year-old grandmother loved to tell stories of her youth again and again as if she was trying to figure out her past experiences. In retrospect, perhaps my grandmother was doing what Connelly and Clandinin (1988a) called telling and retelling stories in order to help her shape the meaning of her past life and set the direction for her future life.

Telling and Retelling Our Stories of Lives

> We had the experience but missed the meaning. (T.S. Eliot cited in Mattingly, 1991)

The following story was written two years ago in my research proposal. It is a part of a record of my past experiences.

When I was teaching, the activity that I felt most comfortable with was reading stories to my students. When the children were in the first year of kindergarten, I read stories to them almost every day. Even when they were in the second year and I had to drill them a lot on reading, writing, and calculating, I tried to find time to read stories to them. I suspect the reason why stories and storytelling were so important in my teaching went back long before I became a teacher.

Whenever I recall the image of my parents, a picture of them reading quietly always comes to my mind. I feel that my parents, especially my dad, loved reading. He read all the time. Even though both of my parents had never read aloud to my brother and me because they did not have time, they always bought a lot of story books for us. During that time, my aunt always told us stories. I loved listening to the stories. My favorite story was Little House on the Prairies *written by Laura Ingalls Wilder. When I grew up and could read books on my own, I read all the time and began to create imaginary stories in my own mind.*

I believe in the power of a story. Children learn a lot from listening to stories and telling stories. From my point of view, children will learn to love reading if they are read to every day or if they see somebody around them reading. Also, they will realize that printed words can communicate something which they love. Then they will develop their own desire to read by themselves. However, in my own teaching, I could not engage children in all these ways because of time constraints, and the pressure of examinations.

This story sorted itself out in different ways, according to time and the context in which I told and retold it. Before I retold the story in my proposal, I told and retold it many times to my friends in order to make sense of it. When I first told this story to one of my close friends, it was different than when I retold it in my proposal. Her response and my own new understandings caused me to tell it differently, to tell it with new insights.

As I retold this story in my proposal, I found I had come to understand it in an altered way. I also related it differently for the particular audience of proposal readers. I constructed and re-constructed my own story in a way that made new sense to me and my listener. From telling and retelling this story, I learned to make sense of my teaching experiences in ways I did not understand when I was in the midst of my action in the classroom. It was my telling and retelling of the story both in my talking and writing that gave me my own space to listen to myself, to develop my own voice, and to learn to tell a new story of teaching. The retelling of this story allowed me to grow and change (Clandinin & Connelly, 1993). As a teacher, I began to trust my own voice, and to have the courage to fail (Calkins & Harwayne, 1991). My reading of Connelly and Clandinin (1988b) helped to confirm my belief that we, as human beings, learn to make sense of our experiences by telling and retelling our stories. They described,

> humans make meaning of experience by endlessly telling and retelling stories about themselves that both refigure the past and create purpose in the future. (p. 24)

Connelly and Clandinin draw our attention to the importance of storytelling as a way of searching for meaning in our lives. We sometimes tell stories about our experiences that are powerful, puzzling, or upsetting in order to make those experiences more sensible. Telling and retelling our stories offer us a way to make sense of what has happened in the past (Mattingly, 1991). With retelling our stories, words that hardly fit begin to be more appropriate as we try to shape and reshape the meaning to fit the context (Bateson, 1989).

I have now let go of the above story. I do not want to live and tell this story anymore. The act of my telling and retelling my own story, like the act of rereading a book, propelled me forward with a sense of direction and momentum (Calkins & Harwayne, 1991). It allowed me to rethink my past, my present and my future. I became more aware of myself and why I do what I do. I also could figure out new stories that I wanted to tell and live in my future teaching. I could let go of my past because I was aware of my direction in the future. Mikkelsen (1987) encouraged me to think about the power of story in the lives of young children. She gave an example of a fifth grader who told and wrote a story to find the power, control, and balance within herself. Samantha, a little girl in Mikkelsen's classroom, wrote and re-wrote her story many times in order to understand herself and to cope with her powerless condition.

From Mikkelsen's telling of Samantha's story and from my own experiences of telling and re-telling my teaching story, I see narrative or story as a shaping tool for structuring and re-structuring our experiences. Through telling and retelling our stories, we renew our voices, and gain new understandings (Beattie, 1993). It seems to me that we can live through our experiences and not learn much from them. Storytelling or narrative inquiry seems to be a powerful way to help us make meaning from our experiences. It can facilitate reflection on action by helping us find how our tacit knowledge guides our practices (Mattingly, 1991). It also can be used as a way of finding out more about our beliefs and about the the assumptions underlying our actions in the classrooms (Newman, 1987; Mattingly, 1991). It seems to me that when we tell and retell our stories, we not only reflect a world but also create a world. Mattingly (1991) helped me think about how the process of sharing our stories encourages us to become more aware of ourselves, of who we are, of where we came from, and of what we are going to do in the future. She wrote,

> Stories not only give meaning to experiences we have already lived through. They also provide us a forward glance, helping us anticipate meaningful shapes for situations even before we enter them, allowing us to envision endings from the very beginning. (p. 237)

Therefore, I felt it was very important for me as a researcher to try to encourage the two teachers, Carol and Michael, to tell and retell their teaching stories because it was through the process of telling and retelling our own stories that we learned to pull together the fragmented pictures of our lives and set direction for our future (Coles, 1989).

Brief Overview of the Study

Coming to Know Carol and Michael

In Chapters 4 and 5 I describe my stories of Carol and Michael and how I invited both of them to be a part of my research journey.

When I first started thinking about working with experienced teachers to explore how they managed their dilemmas in teaching, I thought of working with only one teacher so I could learn more about his/her life. However, when I told a friend that I wanted to work with only one teacher for the research, she suggested I find more teachers. My friend said that I never knew what would happen in the future. Therefore, I should not tie my work to the life of only one teacher. It would be better to have three teachers. As I listened to her, I understood her point and her concern. But I did not think I could work closely with too many teachers. I decided to work with two teachers. I wanted to work with teachers whom I admired and felt comfortable with, teachers whose lives were filled with caring and love for teaching.

The person who first came to my mind when I thought about this research was Carol. I had known Carol for two years and had conducted my pilot study in her classroom. While writing my research proposal, I invited her to be a part of my story.

My story with Carol had begun when I was looking for a classroom to observe for a course assignment. I had just started my doctoral program in Canada and had not observed in any schools. When Dr. Janis Blakey mentioned Carol's name, I wrote her a note to introduce myself and to ask to visit her classroom. During this time Carol was pursuing her Master's degree and was working part-time as a kindergarten teacher in a Preprimary Program.

I visited Carol in her classroom the next morning. When I first met her, I had no idea she would play such a key role in helping me understand my teaching story. As I observed her teaching, I became fascinated by the way she set up her class and by her style of teaching. I ended up talking to her after class and was surprised when she began her conversation by talking about her philosophy and how it expressed itself in her teaching. I began to question myself about my own teaching and philosophy.

I observed Carol in her classroom many times and wrote a paper about how I made sense of her teaching. At the end of the semester, we had a conversation outside of her classroom. That day Carol shared stories of her childhood experiences and how she had developed her own philosophy over time. From listening to her, it appeared to me that Carol knew who she was and how the pieces of her life fit together.

I decided to invite Michael to be a part of this research after I had worked with him for a while. I met Michael in the summer 1991 shortly after I began to write the research proposal. At that time Michael was teaching in a school where I had to observe and to provide activities for the children. He appeared as a young and energetic teacher. From our work and conversations, I learned that Michael trusted his own voice and had courage to take risks in his teaching and learning. He seemed to have faith in children and hope for the world. I was impressed with the way he worked with young children and how he cared for other people around him. I was also fascinated by the way he viewed the world. By the end of the summer, I invited him to be a part of the study.

Because they worked in different schools, we agreed I would come to visit each of their classrooms for two half-days per week from January until June 1992.

Sharing Our Teaching Stories

According to Connelly and Clandinin (1990), there are a number of kinds of narrative data including field notes, journal records, conversation transcripts, storytelling, letter writing, autobiographical, and biographical writing. I chose to keep field notes based on participant observation, a researcher's journal, and transcripts of conversations.

Participant observation

Participant observation allowed me, as a researcher, to become a member of these two classrooms and to participate in the classroom situations. Through observing and participating in their classrooms for six months, I became familiar with the two teachers and with their children and could understand their teaching practices. During my observations, I constructed fieldnotes of classroom events. I wrote down what I heard, saw, experienced and thought. Each day when I came home I would reconstruct my fieldnotes by expanding or adding information. During the first three weeks of my research journey, I was exhausted with the process of constructing and reconstructing my fieldnotes both in the classrooms and at home. When I was in the classrooms, I tried to write down as much as I could. However, that made me feel unconnected to the teachers and the children. I began to question myself about the process of keeping fieldnotes in the classrooms. In one of my journal entries, I reflected,

> If we were busy writing fieldnotes, how could we see the teachers with our minds and hearts? How could we interact with the children with the feelings of joy and caring? I thought I missed a lot of things as I was busy writing fieldnotes. I could not write and see at the same time. I meant seeing with our minds and heart. If I was worried about memorizing the teachers' words, how could I listen to them fully? I did not think that I could concentrate on two things at the same time. **(Journal; January 23, 1991)**

I decided to manage my dilemma of how to keep fieldnotes by trying to concentrate on one thing at the time. For example, some days I would focus more on how the teachers interacted with the children. Other days, I would focus on how the teachers managed time in their classrooms. In the third month of the research journey, I began to get used to the process of constructing and reconstructing my fieldnotes. I also became familiar with the routines of the schools and with the children. I felt more comfortable with keeping fieldnotes.

However, I developed some new ideas. I wanted to see the difference between writing my fieldnotes after coming back from the field and writing fieldnotes while I was in the classrooms. I wanted to interact more with the children and did not want to worry about keeping fieldnotes. Therefore, there were some days that I did not take any notes. I came in only to be of help in the classrooms. When I went home, I wrote down my feelings and what I remembered hearing or seeing. As I compared my notes from the two situations, I found that I constructed and reconstructed my fieldnotes differently. In the fieldnotes that I wrote after coming back from the classrooms, I would record more about my feelings and the stories with which I was impressed. I sometimes made connections to events that had happened before. It became like a story in itself. In one of the fieldnotes, I reconstructed,

> Today I played with Christie in the role-play area. Christie pretended herself to be an airplane ticket seller. I was a passenger. When I asked to buy a ticket from her, Christie asked me to write my name down on a piece of paper. When I got a ticket from her, I noticed that she wrote down $ 3 and her name which was very interesting. I thought that Christie learned about it from her experiences outside of her school.
>
> After that Christie asked me to help her build an airplane. Jacob and Jack came to join us. After we finished building the airplane, the boys said, "We are the pilots." Christie asked the boys if she could be a pilot but they said, "No." She tried to convince the boys that they could have three pilots. However, Jake said, "Boys drive." Christie was very quiet and then she decided that she would become an air-hostess. As I looked at the situation, I decided to jump in and explained to the boys that girls could become pilots too. However, Christie changed her mind and did not want to be a pilot anymore.
>
> As I reflected on the story, I thought it was a kind of sad. It reminded me how many boys do end up being pilots and how many girls end up being air-hostesses. **(Fieldnotes; May 11, 1992)**

At the same time, the fieldnotes that I recorded in the classrooms and reconstructed after coming home had more information about what was going on in the classrooms and less on my feeling about the situations. The notes were more chronological. An example follows:

> Today I decided that I would focus my observation on how Michael spent his time in a day.
>
> Michael came to pick me up at 8 o'clock this morning. When we arrived at the school, he went to the central office. Around 8:30, he came to the classroom to prepare activities for the children.
>
> At 8:50, the bell rang for the first time and Michael came downstairs to pick up the children.
>
> At 8:55, the bell rang for the second time. Michael and the children came to the classroom.
>
> 9:05 Circle Activity
>
> After the children and Michael sang a "Good Morning" song, Michael talked to them about their fieldtrip to a store.

> After he marked the register, they read four poems together. Michael added the poem about "green" for the children to read.
>
> Green
> Green, green
> What is green?
> Broccoli is green,
> Tasty as can be.
>
> After that he brainstormed the children's ideas about food that had green, pink, black, brown, and white. **(Fieldnotes; February 7, 1992)**

To understand the teachers' and the children's stories, I found I needed both kinds of fieldnotes.

Conversations

Usually the teachers and I had conversations at the end of the day. Our conversations were tape-recorded. Both Carol and Michael shared with me some of the joys and frustrations that they were experiencing in their classrooms. Our conversations varied from fifteen minutes to an hour depending upon how we felt during the day. I tried to transcribe our conversations each weekend. Because I speak English as a second language, all my transcriptions were checked by friends whose English is their mother tongue. An example follows:

> Nophanet: I saw a lot of growth in your class, Carol.
>
> Carol: Yah, I know.
>
> Nophanet: For example, in the block area. At first the children did not play a lot but now they play a lot and more abstract.
>
> Carol: Yah, very deep---concept. Yah, and even their social---the social development like their social type of play and there is motor type of play and the cognitive levels of play. So, if we are looking only at a social level and they were not playing alone. They were interacting with others and co-operating so it's co-operative play, that's the highest degree moving the play along by the input of other people. It flowed.

> Nophanet: And they've begun to integrate writing into their play.
>
> Carol: Yah---yah, they have. Anita has been in that block area a lot and they brought their journals in there a few times---yah. **(Conversation; April 22, 1992, p. 8-9)**

Journals

In my research journey, I used journals as a way to help me understand myself both as a teacher and a researcher. I did not write in my journal every single day. I wrote when I felt like I had something to talk to myself about and to explore my beliefs and ideas. I found that keeping journals during my research study was very useful in helping me understand myself and my teachers better. I gained insight into their situations which was very helpful to our relationships. However, I did not ask Carol and Michael to keep journals for me because I realized that they both were very busy with their teaching and lives. I felt that asking them to write journals would put more burden on them rather than helping them to manage their teaching dilemmas. An example of my journal entries follows:

> I went to visit Michael in his classroom today. We talked for a long time. Michael shared with me his frustration when his children had to move to grade one. He talked a lot about the transition from kindergarten to grade one. I had never realized that Michael also had a lot of frustrations. From listening to his stories, he helped me think about my own stories of teaching. I began to question about my purpose of going out to schools. Before I went to observe Carol and Michael, I always thought about how much I would help them in their teaching. After I went to their classrooms, I began to think about how much I learned from them. I felt that I learned from them more than they learned from me. The more I went to see them and had conversations with them, the more I had conversations with myself. From listening to their stories, they helped me look into myself more. I could feel the difference in myself. It would be impossible for me to understand myself without dialoguing with Carol and Michael. **(Journal; February 7, 1992)**

Constructing and Reconstructing Our Stories

In Chapter 6, I describe how I searched for themes, narrative threads, and tensions in reconstructing the research stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1993). I describe the dilemmas that were created for me by my own experiences and my relationships with the teachers. I also describe researching as a way of understanding myself.

Ethical Considerations

Because the construction and reconstruction of the teachers' stories contain self-disclosure, ethical considerations were embedded throughout the study (Olson, 1991). The research stories were shared with the teachers before they were published. The two teachers had the right to request removal of any parts of the stories they felt uncomfortable in sharing publicly. They were informed of their right to withdraw at any time.

Summary

In Chapter 4, I provide the narrative account which I constructed and shared with Carol. In Chapter 5, I provide the narrative account which I constructed and shared with Michael. In Chapter 6, I describe my own stories of how I constructed and reconstructed the two teachers' stories and my own dilemmas as a researcher. In Chapter 7, I weave the three stories together and describe the process of how Carol and Michael managed their dilemmas of teaching. In the final chapter, I reflect on my experiences of working collaboratively with Carol and Michael and how I see our work as a new way of looking at dilemmas in teaching. I also discuss the implications for teachers and teacher educators in looking at dilemmas as a part of our teaching and how we, as the three teachers, handled our teaching dilemmas.

Chapter IV

Carol's Story

> Teaching grows from the whole of our lives. And that's big. It's bigger than a school's yearly goal or a district's five-year plan. It's bigger than any of us or any of our theories. It's big enough to live for. (Calkins & Harwayne, 1991, p. 305)

When I read Calkins and Harwayne's words in their book Living Between the Lines, it reminded me of Carol, a friend and a teacher whom I joined for this study. I still remember when I first started reconstructing her story after working with her for about six months. During that time I struggled with how to begin to tell her story because I did not see the beginning or the end of her story. It seemed to me that her story of teaching grew from the whole of her being, her life. Therefore, it became a circle, no beginning and no ending.

The more I reflected on her story, the more I came to understand that her story of teaching, like my own story, was complicated and interconnected. One dilemma of teaching was built on another dilemma and it seemed to have no end. As I looked more consciously at our teaching, her teaching and my teaching, I began to realize that teaching reflected life. To deal with teaching is to deal with life. When we live our lives, it seems to me we can't see the end of it. Our lives come in fragments which just go on and on. One dilemma of life was built on another dilemma and that made life more complicated, not as easy as I thought. I saw the present moment of life interlinked with our past. It seems so connected that we couldn't separate our present from our past. By reinterpreting our past, we learned to give meaning to the present and reimagine the future (Bateson, 1989).

As I looked at Carol's story, I came to understand that our dilemmas and the ways we managed them reflected who we were and what we believed. Therefore, to understand a person fully, we need to understand his/her past experiences. It seemed to me that what became dilemmas in one person's life might not be dilemmas in another person's life. Depending on our past experiences, our teaching philosophy, our perspectives of the world, and the contexts in which we live, we frame our dilemmas in different ways. Carol, for example, had her teaching dilemmas which were different from Michael's and mine.

It is important to note that the stories I tell about Carol and Michael came from my own experiences of working with them and the effort to understand my own teaching and life by looking through their lives. The stories are incomplete, and ambivalent. I tell only bits and pieces of their lives, not the whole stories. As a researcher and a friend, I know I can never tell the whole of their stories because their lives are not finished yet. They are still living and reliving their lives. In retelling their stories, I do not strive for completeness and objectivity because I know in my heart that it is impossible. The stories, as Bateson (1989) mentioned, are themselves part of the process of composing lives. From trying to construct Carol's story, I became aware that I could not judge people's lives or their actions unless I knew their whole stories. Rajneesh (1977) asks, "How can somebody judge if they do not know the whole story?" And life never comes all at once. Life comes in fragments and yet judgements seemed to be made about the total (Rajneesh, 1977).

After struggling with how I was making sense of Carol's story, I came to realize that the contexts in which I had worked with Carol over the three years were very important to the way I framed her story. It also helped me to understand Carol clearly. I realized that her story was connected one part with another. One part of the story led to another part and it helped me to understand her more fully as a person, a teacher, and a mother. I could now begin to understand her moral dilemmas and how she managed them as I reflected on her past experiences. Carol's past experiences had become the knowledge she embodied and brought with her to the front door of St. Peter's School. Her knowledge shaped the ways she framed her dilemmas of teaching. As a researcher, I came to realize that to understand a person fully, we need to understand their past experiences as well as the contexts in which he/she lived and is now living.

Early Experiences in Carol's Life

As a little girl, Carol lived on a farm. She remembers her parents as always encouraging her to go to university. Carol loved school. She loved being in school.

> I remembered every fall---for about two weeks before school started, I was so excited to come back. I could hardly sleep at night. I couldn't wait to get back to school and see everybody and start something new, you know. I was just full of energy. But I was weird---(laugh). You know, they said, "You want to go back to school." I said, "I love school." They said, "You are nuts." (laugh) **(Conversation; March 18, 1992, p. 14-15)**

It was this positive experience about schooling that Carol brought to her professional life. She always tried hard to get the children excited about their learning.

> I think I really try hard. I think it's one of my beliefs or one of my values what I try to. My philosophy is to get kids excited about learning---excited about being in school. That is a good thing. **(Conversation; March 18, 1992, p. 14)**

It was Carol's early love of school that seemed to be expressed in her delight with children. After finishing high-school, Carol went to university for two years, then she married after two years of university (**Conversation; February 11, 1992, p. 7**). At the same time Carol got a teaching job as a first grade teacher outside of Edmonton. She saw the schools at that time as traditional, that is, the school curriculum was all pre-planned and the teachers were the center of knowledge. They taught children what they wanted them to learn rather than drawing on the children's knowledge.

> I taught in Leduc my first year of teaching. We had to---it was all pre-planned curriculum. We turned one page to the

> next in the teacher's guide and kids sat in rows and rows and it was hard. **(Conversation; June 3, 1992, p. 6)**

In her second year of teaching, Carol felt bored because she had to teach the same things every day. She also felt the children were not interested in learning. However, she pushed them to learn.

> I found myself yawning in the afternoon. I was bored with it. The kids were bored with it. It didn't suit me so when I had a chance to go and do another career, I said, "O.K." because I wasn't happy doing that sort of---that style. It dried me up. It wasn't fulfilling. It was a job. **(Conversation; June 3, 1992, p. 6)**

At this time she was pregnant so she had to leave teaching. She had to take care of her three children and she began to substitute teach over a five year period. Carol felt that she learned a lot from taking care of her own children.

> I learned through them---what worked and what didn't work---what was---how could I validate them. **(Conversation; June 3, 1992, p. 7)**

She found that when she provided activities for her children without drawing on what they knew, they were only interested for a short period of time. On the other hand, when she drew on what they knew, they were interested longer and seemed excited **(Fieldnotes; December 3, 1989)**.

> It's just---I watched my kids if I set out something for them. If I planned that the kids would do something exactly what I had in mind, they would be frustrated because they could never reach the high calibre of my work, my sample, what I told them to do. And they felt dissatisfied or less of a person because they didn't feel successful that it was their own things. So, I learned to let go of more controlling type of thing and offered more open-ended things like the big boxes that came. The kids played in the play house for weeks. Or the living room was upside-down one day when the kids used blankets. They were in dramatic play. They were off on some adventure, had a little tent and hats and something like that. And you know, when I watched them, they were happy. They didn't need me to watch over them. I didn't have to control every minute. They were growing through play

> and they were happy---really happy. **(Conversation; June 3, 1992, p. 7)**

After being at home for a five year period, her family moved back to Edmonton. Carol began a new job in sales management. She worked in sales management for almost ten years. When she worked for the first company, Carol was quite happy with her job. But then the company closed and she had to go into another sales job. Carol was not happy with it and began to ask herself, "What am I going to do for the rest of my life?" **(Conversation; February 11, 1992, p. 7)**. However, by this time, Carol needed more than two years of university education to return to teaching. She tried to find another sales job. She found it was worse than before. "It was awful and I just started to lose my initiative and direction, my purpose" **(Conversation; February 8, 1992, p. 8)**.

At the same time, Carol began to reflect on her experiences as a sales manager. At one time when she was a regional manager, Carol worked in a supervisory position with three hundred women. It gave her opportunities to interview and train all of these women. From working with these employees, Carol found that about eighty to ninety percent of them lacked self-efficacy because their husbands were very assertive and in control of them. She also felt that these women did not think of themselves as capable people.

> When I was working in sales, I met a lot of women. Like at one time I was a Regional Manager for Northern Alberta, from Red Deer and North, and I had three hundred women working for me and I did a lot of interviewing with them and training. And most of these people---a lot of the people that I interviewed, probably eighty-ninety percent of them, were so lacking in self-efficacy. They nev---they did not think of themselves as being capable people. **(Conversation; February 11, 1992, p. 8)**

Carol tried to help these women be more assertive and feel good about themselves, but she felt that she could not help them much.

> And I couldn't solve it at that level. They (women) were adults. I worked with them and for a few moments they felt good about themselves. Their life patterns were set. **(Conversation; February 11, 1992, p. 8)**

By reflecting on her experiences with these employees, Carol began to think about going back into teaching. She wanted to work with young children because she felt that she wanted to help them develop their self-concepts and to think of themselves as capable people.

> So, I think that's when the idea formed to come back and work with young---young children and help them have really strong self-concepts, to think of themselves as being capable, good people that could do things in life. Whatever you want to do you should be able to plan for it, and do it. **(Conversation; February 11, 1992, p. 8)**

She decided to return to university in order to upgrade her qualifications for teaching. After finishing her B. Ed., Carol went into the Early Childhood Graduate Diploma program. In one of the classes she took for her Diploma program, Carol went to do an observation and a play unit in a Preprimary Program. She got along well with the teacher and really enjoyed the program. "I started my ED CI 404 with Anne Smith, then met Margaret. It was just perfect. It was the perfect thing at the perfect time" **(Conversation; June 3, 1992, p. 7)**. She also felt that the program reflected her philosophy which connected with her experiences of mothering.

> I remembered when I first started taking Early Childhood courses and found out about play as a means of education and a means of learning. And I thought, "Finally, I found something that agrees with my personality." All the other education was---, you know, hard work and you sigh and you get bored. It was so mundane. But with the play, you can see so many possibilities going with---um---the enthusiasm and the energy for learning and the excitement. You know, I'm so happy. It made me feel so good. **(Conversation; March 18, 1992, p. 14)**

When an opportunity to teach in that program came up, Carol decided to apply. After getting the job, Carol won a scholarship. She decided to pursue her Master's degree in Early Childhood Education. While pursuing her Master's degree, she taught half-time in the program. I became acquainted with her when I was starting my doctoral program. We became friends as we studied together and I went to observe her classroom from time to time for about a year.

Meeting Carol, the Teacher

Three years later as I write this, I can recollect the first time I observed Carol in that Preprimary Program. I remember the first day I went to the school. It was a cold day on October 26, 1989. I felt I had been walking for a long time. I was almost frozen when I entered the front door of the school. I saw Carol sitting with four or five children at a writing table. This picture is one that often comes to my mind when I think of her in the Preprimary Program.

I thought of Carol as an ideal teacher of young children, a "perfect teacher" who could transfer the theories she and I had learned to her practices smoothly, without any problems. The books I read about whole language reminded me of her classroom. I felt I could see theory in practice in her classroom. It was in Carol's classroom I came to a picture of what a whole language classroom was like.

As I remembered, her classroom was located in a white old house with a painting on one of its windows. There were four rooms on the main floor of the house which served as the children's learning environment. The rooms were set up into a variety of areas such as a role-play area, a block area, a book area, a writing area, a listening area, a carpentry and an art area. I remembered that there were a lot of books, posters, labels, signs, directories and other kinds of appropriate print all around. There were no worksheets or "skill workbooks" in her classroom. The children (ages three to five) were free to move from one area to another and often integrated their activities by taking material from one area to use in another. Carol and her assistant moved from one room to another as they observed and interacted with the children. I felt that Carol was a teacher and a researcher, that is, she saw her teaching as research. She recorded children's readings and collected samples of children's art works and writings.

I describe several pictures in order to illustrate how I was making sense of her classroom.

Picture One

Carol loved playing with the children in dramatic play. Reading and writing were integrated into their plays. At one time when I went to her classroom, the children were playing "hospital." There were several "nurses" trying to feed the five babies "born" that day. Carol observed the children for a while and then entered their play.

Teacher: Hi! My name is Carol. I'm a health inspector.

Children: Hi!

Teacher: I would like to look at the directions you have on how to take care of babies.

Child: We don't have any.

Teacher: Oh! You're supposed to write the directions for how to take care of the babies. I'll come back next time.

Child: Uh ...... Uh.

The girl pretended to write the directions by scribbling on a piece of paper. Five minutes later, the "door bell" rang.

Teacher: Hi! How are you today?

Child: Fine, thank you.

Teacher: Do you have the directions for how to take care of the babies?

Child: Here it is.

Teacher: This direction is for which baby?

One of the nurses pointed at her baby. The inspector looked at the baby and then at the directions.

Teacher: What does it say?

Child: Feed a bottle a day.

Carol put her "official stamp" on the directions and then pinned the paper on the wall. She continued questioning the children. She picked up a piece of paper and printed a sign which said, "Baby Care Directions for the Nursery." She placed this above the children's directions and read her sign to them.

Picture Two

Another activity I often saw when I went to the classroom was "word game." Carol wrote words on cards and let the children guess what the words were. The words related to the activities the children were engaged in within the classroom. For example, one of the girls pretended to be "Red Riding Hood" on Halloween Day. One of the statements Carol wrote on the card was "Red Riding Hood." Carol wrote words related to the children's experiences. She adapted the game depending upon the ages of the children. For the younger children, she let them dictate words and she wrote them. After that they played the "word game" together. For children who had done a lot of reading, she either encouraged them to spell words they dictated and helped them by pronouncing the sound of the letter or she encouraged them to dictate words that began with the same letter.

To me, this game was very special because it helped the children learn new words without being pushed by the teacher. The children were encouraged to monitor their own activity. They enjoyed playing "word game" with Carol because the words were meaningful to them and they chose to learn the words themselves. I thought they also had a sense of becoming experts in their own learning. Carol related what the children were learning to what they already knew. She sometimes used phonic instruction in her teaching but she used it in the context that made sense to the child.

On one of my visits, Carol was playing "word game" with a five-year-old boy. She let the boy sit on her lap and then she wrote down something on a card.

Nick: That's my name.

Teacher: How do you know?

Nick: It's an N......N for Nick.

Carol picked up another card and wrote the word "nurse" on it.

Teacher: I'll trick you now. It's someone in the hospital. You saw this person when you visited Kathy.

Nick: Doctor......No, "doctor" starts with "d"......"nurse".....yes......it's "nurse".

Teacher: I thought I had you for a minute. I'll trick you now.

Nick: I want you to write "ambulance."

Teacher: You can help me write it. I know you read a lot. (She then said the word slowly.) Am....bu....lance.

Nick: "a"

Teacher: Right. Am....bu....lance

Nick: "b"

After writing down "a," Carol wrote "m" and explained, "It's an "m" between "a" and "b" but we couldn't hear it." After she wrote down the word "ambulance," they continued playing a word game. Then Carol mixed the word cards that she had played with Nick the previous day and let him guess word by word. When Nick read the word "airplane," she said,

Teacher: Is there anything the same about these words? (She showed him "airplane" and "ambulance.")

Nick: They both begin with "a."

Teacher: You're right. What are you going to do now? Do you want another word or do you want to quit?

Nick: I want to write in my journal.

Teacher: You could write these words in your journal.

Nick: No.....I'll write "dragon." (He began to draw a dragon.)

Teacher: Alright. You can do whatever you want.

Picture Three

My most impressive picture of the Preprimary Program is one of the children. The children had opportunities to make their own choices. They could do whatever they decided to do within the space provided. Every time I visited the classroom, the children were playing all over the place. Some children were playing at a dramatic area, some were playing at a block area and some were reading stories together. They were wonderful. I did not hear them say, "We can't write" or "We can't read." Every time I asked them, "What does it say?," they tried to read and told me what they thought it said. Even a three-year-old boy said, when he saw printed words on my wallet, "It says purse." The children in this program believed that they could write and read by themselves. When I asked a five-year-old boy, "How can you read?," he said, "I figure it out."

Another picture is of the children happily walking to the writing area and, with bright marker pens, beginning to write. They wrote as best as they could. When a little girl finished her drawing, she wrote down the word "heart." I asked her, "What does it say?" She answered, "Heart.....my heart." I asked, "How can you write?" She said, "I figure it out by myself and I know how to spell something."

Picture Four

Story reading was an activity that took place every single day in the classroom. Carol read to her students both in groups and individually. She always encouraged the children to take books home and to read with their parents. It did not surprise me that children in this classroom loved reading. Their reading reflected their confidence. Imagine a three-year-old reading, Three Little Pigs or a five-year-old reading, Brown

Bear....Brown Bear....What do you see? These children read with assurance and they believed that they were readers.

Carol taught in the Preprimary Program for two years. When she had almost finished her Master's thesis, she applied for a new teaching position with a local school board. She was assigned to teach in the first grade at St. Peter's School.

Conducting a Pilot Study

My relationship with Carol continued when she got a new teaching position at St. Peter's School. In September 1990, I was looking for a teacher with whom I could work on my pilot study. During that time, I was not sure what I intended to do for my research. I just wanted to observe in a classroom and hoped that I could get some ideas for my research from being in the classroom. Also as a stranger from another culture, and a person who did not speak English as my first language, I was consciously aware of my ability in communicating and understanding English. I wanted to try out research methodologies, to check my ability to take fieldnotes, to check my ability in understanding a teacher's language and the classroom context, as well to try my ability to offer meaningful interpretations of the data.

Carol was the first person that came to my mind when I thought about conducting a pilot study because I was very impressed with her teaching in the Preprimary Program and I wanted to know what was going on with her life in a new school. I phoned her and asked for permission to visit her classroom.

After getting permission from Carol, I visited her classroom for two months during October and November, 1990. On my first visit to Carol's classroom, she was teaching math in a circle activity. The children sat around her and they were discussing mathematics. Carol used a "real" coin to explain counting. After that she introduced me to her class and indicated that I would come and be with the class for a while. She told the children that they could come and read stories to me. Carol seemed energetic about her teaching and told me she did not have any frustrations (**Fieldnotes; October 12, 1990**).

I remembered her grade one classroom was set up similar to her classroom at the Preprimary Program except the space was much smaller. The classroom was set up into a variety of areas such as a plant area, a pet area, a water area, a sand area, a reading area, a writing area, a listening area, and a role-play area. On a chart, Carol wrote down the classroom's philosophy which she and the children had discussed. She wrote,

> We believe each of us is different. We learn differently.
> We all learn by doing things and by playing.
> When we have group time, we need to listen.
> We believe we should be:
> -helpful   in learning   at clean-up
> -nice   love each other   share
> be a Good Friend

As I observed Carol, I was impressed with the way she tried to transfer her philosophy to her teaching. At the same time I was full of wondering and questioning. I felt there were too many children in the classroom. In my first journal entry, I wrote,

> I did not see any differences in Carol's method when comparing her teaching in this school and the Preprimary Program. The only thing that I noticed was the number of the children. There were twenty-five children in her grade one classroom. I thought that it was too many for her to use the "child-centered" approach. However, she was still using it. She also tried to transfer her philosophy of education to her students by telling them that they learned differently and they learned from playing. I thought that it was wonderful if the children understood her philosophy because they would not feel inferior when they could not do things like their friends. I felt that Carol tried to transfer

> her philosophy to her practice in her grade one classroom.
> **(Journal; October 17, 1990)**

I continued my visits in Carol's classroom during the months of October and November. I figured out a lot of things from being in her classroom. I had a feeling that Carol tried to use the same kind of approach as she had used in the Preprimary Program but she adapted it to the ages of the children.

Learning in Carol's classroom occurred primarily through projects, learning centers, and the play activities that she planned and that reflected the children's interests. For example, the project on "Ten Little Mice" emerged from a story book entitled Ten Little Mice written by Joyce Dunbar. After reading the story to the children and discussing it with them, Carol asked them to take care of one of the mice in the story. Carol put a chart of the project on Ten Little Mice on the bulletin board over the pet area and asked the children to draw the mice that they selected to take care of on the chart. On my last visit to her classroom, Carol extended this project to another project which she called "pet diary." She asked the children to write in their diaries about their pets. In their diaries, the children put the date first, then drew the pictures of their pets and wrote stories about them. The children walked to the pet area to draw the pictures of the pets they wanted to write about in their diaries. When I asked a little girl about her drawing, she said, "It's him (the hamster)." When I asked her to read her words, she read, "Stripe is sleeping."

Carol spent much of her planning time preparing the classroom environment so that her students could learn through active involvement with each other. During my visits, Carol changed the layout three times. The first time she re-arranged the centers because they were very messy from the day before. She was frustrated. She asked herself, "What am I doing here? I'm not a teacher. I'm a housekeeper" (**Conversation; October 16, 1990**). However, she overcame her feelings when she told herself that the children came from different backgrounds than did the children in the Preprimary Program. She should do something to help them remember where things were. Therefore, she decided to re-arrange the new classroom. The second time Carol rearranged her classroom because a Halloween theme emerged. The third time she rearranged her classroom because the children's interests changed to include a "house area."

In my journal, I tried to make sense of why Carol was still using a "child-centered" approach in her classroom even though I felt there were a lot of students in the classroom. I wrote,

> I thought that the problem of using the "child-centered" approach did not depend only on the number of the children in the classroom, but also on the teacher's knowledge about this approach, her belief about how children learned and the way she saw her philosophy working in the classroom. I felt that Carol still used the "child-centered" approach because she saw it worked out in her classroom at the Preprimary Program. So, she believed in the method itself. She tried to transfer her philosophy to her practice of teaching in the grade one classroom. **(Journal; November 17, 1990)**

At the same time, I began to be aware that I learned a lot from being and working with Carol not only as a researcher but also as a teacher. I started to realize what teaching was like and what teachers did to cope with their teaching situations. In one of my journal entries, I reflected,

> When observing Carol in the classroom, I felt that I learned a lot from her. I learned not only as a researcher but also as a teacher. I learned a lot about the teaching method that was wonderful for me because I could adapt it when I go back to my country. She also made my knowledge of theories I learned from the university clearer than before because I could see how she transferred them to practice. When comparing her teaching and my teaching, I felt that Carol devoted herself a lot to her work. From observing Carol, I felt that teaching was hard work. Teaching was hard not only because teachers had to manage twenty-five students at a time and teach a range of subjects, but also because teaching required reflecting on one's own

> knowledge and beliefs and considering one's actions and their consequences. **(Journal; November 17, 1990)**

I also sensed Carol had a few frustrations in her work. I noticed there were a lot of interruptions both from the children and from the central office while she was teaching. However, I was not sure if my instinct about her frustration was right. I believed Carol could overcome her feelings of frustration. In another journal entry, I reflected,

> Carol said that she tried to encourage parents to come into the classroom and help their children learn. But there was only one parent who came in. We also talked about her work in the Preprimary Program. I felt that Carol got a few frustrations from working. Also, when she was teaching, there were a lot of interruptions. I felt that this school was totally different from the Preprimary Program. However, it seemed to me that Carol had transferred her philosophy to her practice very well. I was sometimes afraid that some days Carol might be tired of doing what she was doing right now if she did not get any support from the parents. I was glad that she got a lot of support from her colleagues and the principal. Also, she was mature enough to overcome her feeling of frustration. **(Journal; October 17, 1990)**

Carol's feeling of frustration became clear to me when I visited her at her home. On that day, I took my fieldnotes and journals with me to ask her to check my interpretations of her work. From our conversation, I felt that Carol had begun to reflect on her teaching in the last three months and had begun to question her teaching and her philosophy. It seemed to me that she was confused and frustrated that day. She was isolated and said, "I felt isolated in a way that nobody does the same things as I do." She was questioning whether her teaching and her philosophy were appropriate for her students. She said,

> I'm thinking about Don and Mike and Jarade and---you know, and a couple of the other kids. They are not moving at all. They don't even know the letters of the alphabet I talked about. I review all the letters, you know, once through---twice through and some of them know maybe---six---they can pick them up and that's it. They know the letters of their names maybe a couple of the letters that have meant something to them. But they don't pick them up once through. I guess if you have a rich background and a

> rich foundation once through---and twice through---it's enough for kids to make sense of it and they integrate it and make connections. And if they don't have that background or like you said, you know, the parents helping them be ready and expecting to learn. It's going to work for them. So, I have to set up activities where they can focus on parts and begin to make sense of words like strategy. **(Conversation; November 26, 1990)**

Like other elementary school teachers, Carol felt that she got a lot of pressure from the prescribed grade one curriculum.

> It was the curriculum. Grade one should learn to read and write. That's part of the curriculum. So, I have to be able to send these kids out with some types of skills, reading and writing, feeling successful. **(Conversation; November 26, 1990)**

She also was not sure about the future of the children. She did not know what types of teachers her students were going to face.

> I guess there's another thing I'm thinking about what they (the children) are going to do in grade two if they don't have my play philosophy there. They are going to feel like real failures and I can't let them go into grade two---feeling like a failure. They have, like my big goal for all of the kids in class is they are going to come out---feeling successful about themselves---that they are going to know that they can learn that they are learners and that learning is fun so that they can learn through play. So, I guess I have to give them extra skills to do that. **(Conversation; November 26, 1990)**

After Carol talked to me for a while, she affirmed that she could not change her teaching from the child-centered approach to anything else. She began to realize that she was in chaos as she struggled to try to transfer her philosophy to her teaching. From reflecting on her teaching and her philosophy, Carol was aware that if she could get past chaos, she would be fine. She said,

> I think what I'm feeling what's happening with me is that I'm going into a new growth stage in my own teaching philosophy. I grew this much at the Preprimary Program. Now I'm in the new situation. So, I'm getting even stronger but I have to go through the chaos before I see the answer, right? **(Conversation; November 26, 1990)**

In my last journal entry with Carol, I too began to make more sense of what it meant to be a teacher. I wrote,

> If doing philosophy was to become highly conscious about what we were doing, Carol was doing philosophy with herself. Since the society changed all the time, Carol needed to reflect on and reassess her philosophy continuously. Philosophy might not be an answer to anything but it made us aware of what we were doing in our everyday lives. Since each situation as well as each group of children was unique in its own needs and capabilities, Carol might not find an absolute answer for what good teaching was but she might find what was an appropriate teaching method for her student. **(Journal; November 26, 1990)**

Beginning to Work with Carol

I met Carol again when I began my research. By then I had written my proposal and had begun to focus on dilemmas.

From the last time that I had talked with her, I had begun to be more aware of what teaching was like. Carol's story made me reflect back again and again on my own story of teaching. By reflecting on my own story, I began to realize the ways I had coped with conflicts in my teaching. At the same time, I began to be curious about how Carol would cope with her conflicts. I began to see similarities between her story and my story and realized there were conflicts going on in our stories. I felt that we both were trying to figure out ways to live through the conflicts in our stories. However, at that time I could not find the language to name the conflicts that occurred in our teaching. In a conversation with Dr. Jean Clandinin, a committee member, we figured out a language to speak of those conflicts in teaching. She introduced me to the word "dilemma." After reading through some research literature, I began to realize that the conflicts with which Carol and I were faced were dilemmas.

I saw "dilemmas" as ethical dimensions of teachers' practical conflicts. The dilemmas created both internal conflicts within the teachers and external conflicts between the teachers and the environment. However, from reflecting on my own story, I began to see dilemmas as internal conflicts rather than external conflicts. I felt that most of the dilemmas I had were internal conflicts. As I tried to figure out how to work within a school environment, I had a lot of argument within myself about my teaching.

By reflecting on my story of teaching, I felt that I learned more about myself and could understand myself better. I began to be conscious of what I was doing and why I was doing some things which I had never realized before while I was teaching. I began to see reflection as a way of helping teachers understand themselves and learn to cope with their dilemmas in teaching.

While I was writing the proposal, I had been thinking about Carol. I was aware that Carol was my friend as well as the teacher with whom I had been working for two years. I wondered what Carol would say if I invited her to be a part of my research study. I was aware that I really wanted to work with her because she was my "ideal" teacher. I did not want her to get lost in the school system as I had been. I also felt that teachers needed to have somebody who could understand them to talk to because I saw talking as one way of reflection. Therefore, I decided to phone Carol and invited her to be a part of my research journey. I also sent her a copy of my proposal.

The First Day of My Research

In all my life, the order of number seemed to be very important to me. I am not sure whether it is a part of my culture or if it is only a part of my personal journey. The first day always brought me a lot of memories. I still remember the first day my parents took my brother and me to the boarding school. It was nineteen years ago but the picture of my brother and me waving at our parents as they were leaving is still clear in my mind. Also, I remember my first day of driving as though it were yesterday. The feeling is still fresh. I still feel how scared and excited I was on that day. When I reflect on my life experiences, I feel I can remember things better on the first day or the first year. Also, on the first day I look at things using my stranger's eyes. On first days, I am always curious and look inquiringly and wonderingly on the world around me. I always question and wonder, and try to make sense of what I see. Bateson (1984) in her book With a Daughter's Eye talked about her mother, Margaret Mead, an anthropologist who emphasized the importance of recording first impressions of the events that came to our lives. Bateson wrote,

> Margaret always emphasized the importance of recording first impressions and saving those few pages of notes instead of discarding them in the scorn of later sophistication, for the informed eye has its own blindness as it begins to take for granted things that were initially bizarre. (p. 165)

Margaret Mead drew our attention to the importance of recording first impressions in the field, because, on the first day we always looked at the world wonderingly and inquiringly. I believe it is in wondering and questioning that learning begins. Therefore, I feel that it is important for me to tell a story of my first day of visiting Carol's classroom.

My Journey to St. Peter's School

I got up early the first morning I went to visit Carol as part of my research study. Even though I had observed her in the classroom many times, I was still excited. I told myself that this time was different from the other times because it was my dissertation. When I looked through the window, I saw the snow falling heavily outside. I told myself, "It's snowing again. I hate it." However, I realized that the unexpected weather was also part of my journey. Every time I began to do new things, something happened.

I remembered that one time when school started and I had to go back to my boarding school, it was raining. It made me more upset then because I did not want to leave home. However, my aunt told me that raining meant the beginning of new life. It was a good sign of life and I was going to have a wonderful year. In Thai culture, raining was a good sign. It brings happiness because we are an agricultural country. Therefore, I felt much better.

It was snowing on my first day of doing research. I thought it could be "white rain" in Thailand and tried to console myself, "It might be a good sign that everything is going to be fine."

I left home at 6:45 a.m. It was still dark. I felt cold as I walked to a bus stop. There was only one woman waiting for a bus. "It is too early for people to get out of bed," I told myself. I had been sitting on the bus for a long time before I made a connection. I began to be worried when I got on a new bus because I was not sure that the bus was going to take me to the school. I decided to ask the bus driver. His answer is still in my mind. He said, "I don't know either." Then he looked at a map and told me that he could not find where the school was. I was very scared and wanted to cry. I told myself, "I am lost." I was worried because I promised Carol that I was going to observe her. I did not want to miss the first day of my observation. I was thinking of getting off the bus right away and phoning a cab. Then I realized that I did not know where I was. How could I tell the cab where to pick me up? I was experiencing a dilemma before I saw dilemmas in Carol's life.

However, the bus driver was very kind. He stopped the bus and asked a person from the Edmonton Transit where the school was. I felt much better but I was still scared because I was not sure whether I could recognize the way to walk to the school. I realized I was not good at directions. The directions always made me confused. The last time I visited the school was a year ago and I had taken a different bus. The bus driver let me get off the bus when he had already passed the bus stop and told me that I had to walk one block back. I was totally confused because I had no idea how far a block would be. I looked around and saw snow all over the place. I walked and walked without knowing the direction I was supposed to go. I looked around again and could not see a school. After walking for a while, I decided to ask a girl who walked past and she showed me where the school was.

The School, the Teacher, and the Children

St. Peter's School appeared to me as a white, flat, one story container. The building was situated alone admidst the snow without a boundary or fence or gate. The school building was totally different from my image of what a school building should be. Whenever I thought about school, a picture of a lot of buildings with boundaries and a playground came to my mind. When I first saw St. Peter's School, I felt the building looked like an industrial box. It was big and reminded me of a factory more than a school.

It was already 8:30 when I arrived at school. I saw a teacher greet the students at the front door of the school. He said, "Happy New Year" and asked the children to stamp their feet on the carpet so the snow would get off their boots. I asked the way to the principal's office. After I introduced myself to the principal, a lady in the office told me the way to go to Carol's classroom. On the way to Carol's classroom, I again got lost. Therefore, a teacher showed me Carol's classroom.

When I arrived at Carol's classroom, I saw her standing at the front of the room greeting the children. When she saw me, she introduced me to Nancy, her assistant teacher. As I walked into the classroom, I heard a little boy asking his friend, "Is it your birthday?" After his friend nodded, the boy said, "O.K. See you at recess." I looked around the classroom and saw a little girl sitting alone and crying. I wondered if the little girl, like myself, was feeling lost and confused. Other children were coming into the classroom and sat in a book area.

Circle activity

Around 8:40 I heard an announcement about Christmas and Jesus. Carol walked to the book area and sat on a chair. She and the children prayed together.

Carol began her lesson by asking the children, "What year is it now?" One of the children answered, "1992." Carol put a calendar of animals on the board and told the children that she knew this year was 1992 because it showed on the calendar. Then she pointed out the number 1992 to her students.

One of the children was playing with some stuffed animals. Carol told him, "Kaine, it's not time quite yet to play." Carol asked, "What is the first month? What month is it now?" One of the boys said, "December...December 21st" Carol said, "It's your birthday, right?" The boy nodded. Carol told her students that the month was January. Then she pointed at the numbers in the calendar and let the children read them.

After that Carol stuck different colored small circles on the date of the day on the calendar. She stuck them on until January 5th. She pointed at each circle and asked the children to tell the color of each. The children said, "Pink...blue...green...pink...blue..." Carol asked the children to guess the color of the circle for January 6th. Some of them said, "Blue." Some of them said, "Pink." Carol pointed out the colors of the circles again and asked the children to repeat the colors. Then she asked them again to tell the color of the circle for January 6th. Some of the children said, "Green." Carol repeated the colors of the small circles one more time and told the children, "It's called the pattern."

Then Carol showed the children their name cards and asked them to put their name cards in the basket when they first came in in the morning. After that she read a story to the children. The title of the story was The Puppy Who Wanted a Boy written by Jane Thayer and illustrated by Lisa McCue. Before reading a story to the children, Carol read the name of the story, the author, and the illustrator to them. While reading the story to the children, Carol made her voice sound like the actors in the story. The children were listening very quietly. I had a feeling that they all were involved in the story. After reading the story, Carol asked one of the children to bring a dog puppet to her. She asked the children, "Could we call this Petey dog? (Petey is the name of a dog in the story.) All of the children said, "Yes." It seemed to me that they were very pleased with it. After that Carol told her students that they could bring their Christmas gifts to show their friends if they wanted to. She related an activity of the day to the event of the school by telling the children about the Christmas story and baby Jesus. She explained about Jesus's birthday and asked the children, "What should we give to baby Jesus?" She told the children that they could make a big book for baby Jesus and showed them a sheet of paper. On the sheet of paper, there is a sentence, "I would give baby Jesus..." Carol read the sentence to the children and explained to them that they could draw a picture of a gift they would like to give to baby Jesus. Then she let the children work on their own.

Coming to Understand Carol's Teaching Dilemmas

As I worked in Carol's classroom and talked with her, I began to understand more about the dilemmas that Carol experienced. As a researcher who tried to retell her story in the way that was authentic to how she told it, I felt that her story of teaching was very complicated. It was a story within story, a kind of narrative spiral. Every one of her stories was connected to each other, the past, the present, the future and they reflected who she was. When telling her story of teaching, Carol kept looking back and forth between her past and present. The way she told her story of teaching reflected her view of life.

> It's my whole life. It isn't just teaching. It's my whole life experience what I have seen, what I have done, what I have experienced, the people that I have known. **(Conversation; April 29, 1992, p. 5)**

Carol realized that life was so connected that we could not separate our present from our past.

> Oh! you can't separate the past. It doesn't matter how much you try to forget it, it's there in your unconscious even if it is not there in your conscious level processing. Like whatever I do up here in my mind right now, it is what I'm conscious of but I know how it affected me unconsciously last year way deep, deep, deep learning inside the core of me. The questioning, the speaking, the chaos---um---so that's there. It's always there in your unconscious. You can't erase it. No matter how much you are trying maybe you know, you don't want to think about it because it's painful. It's still there and it's affecting every decision you make whether or not you are aware of it. **(Conversation; April 29, 1992, p. 5)**

As I worked with Carol, I was consciously aware of her reality of life. When I reflected on her story, it appeared to me that Carol had a major dilemma that continued from her teaching last year. She had a very strong philosophy about teaching and learning which she articulated from time to time. Carol believed that "Children could be trusted to be independent learners" (**Planning Strategies & Conversation; April 29, 1992, p. 3**). She kept her planning folder or what she called Philosophy, Objectives, Webs & Centers. In the planning folder, there were different sections such as philosophy, units, long range plans, objectives, literature, dramatic play, cooking, blocks, art, and religion. She told me that the planning folder was still in process. She added things as she was teaching. In the planning folder, she put down her philosophy as follows:

> I believe in development of the WHOLE child: spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, creative, social. Each area

> is as valued as the other. A child needs to have a balance, although she/he has stronger areas. Each child develops in his/her own unique way and time.
>
> I believe that children learn through play.
>
> I believe that children learn by being actively involved in their learning-exploring, discovering, and experiencing.
>
> I believe in making connections with the children with the real and living world to promote harmony, wholeness, and peace.
>
> I believe in fostering personal safety in the classroom to promote independent learning, risk-taking, and self-reliance.
>
> I believe that children are naturally curious and will respond positively to motivating open-ended materials and activities.

However, Carol felt that half of her students in grade one were "passive and dependent learners" (**Conversation; March 4, 1992, p. 4**). She became aware of the children who were living stories that did not match her own story.

> There were so many that I had last year that were not active seekers. No matter what I set out they would just kind of glance over it. But they wouldn't be curious. They wouldn't become involved. (**Conversation; April 29, 1992, p. 3**)

Therefore, she struggled to try to find ways that matched her teaching with the children by reflecting on her philosophy and the reality of the children. Carol decided to change her style of teaching.

> So I began to think about the different kinds of learning styles and different types of learners. And so I thought maybe---maybe my belief is too far along the continuum for them. Maybe they are further back in their development of being an active learner. So I tried to find way to support that by heavy scaffolding like for basic activities and math. We had manipulatives. Some of them couldn't do the math or explain or they couldn't---um---like do patterns. If we were working on pattern, they had blocks. They wouldn't be able to remember how to do the patterns and continue it or they couldn't remember how to join one little set and another set and think of how many together or---um---take away operation and minus to how to start with one entity and remember pull others away like those simple basic things even counting. One fellow last year could not count

> to ten, one-to-one correspondence. So, it gave me lots of experiences. I had to sit down and scaffold with a lot of them, asking them to think or tell me what you are doing? How do you know? Like all those really basic questions on such a simple, simple level. And for a while last year I thought that my philosophy was wrong that some children are not independent learners. I thought, "Here, I'm mistaken. I'm wrong." And so I set it up so I would control their learnings. I broke it down into simple things that they could do on their own but I would be in charge of them. It was a very teacher-directed scenario. **(Conversation; April 29, 1992, p. 4**)

Even though Carol changed her practice to fit with the reality of the children, she still struggled within herself. She realized that what she was trying to do did not match what she really believed about teaching and learning. She had a lot of argument within herself about what her teaching should be.

> It (teaching) gave me sleepless nights. I'd been thinking, carrying home all this knowledge about how to control the children and their learnings and I was feeling it was causing a rift in my thinking, in my "being" because it did not match what I really truly believe. It was a temporary belief about I must be wrong because of all those problems that I was having last year in the classroom. I thought, "I'm wrong. So, I'd better change. I'm not doing these kids a service the way that I'm teaching." Like there was for about a one month period I was pushing myself that way to control, make sure they learned, giving them a little bit of knowledge all the time. I'm leading them along, sequential lock-step. "O.K now you know this, now you can try that. Now you know this, now you can try that." And---but it was---it was---I was fighting it. It just wasn't my philosophy. **(Conversation; April 29, 1992, p. 4**)

Carol tried to cope with her own internal conflicts by reflecting back on her philosophy of teaching, her practice, and the reality of the children.

> I found towards March like I remembered January being a really bad month. That was the worst time and February I started to come around and by March, April, and May, and June, I knew that my philosophy had been right the whole time but that---these children were just at that far earlier stage of development---so many kids that I had last year that were turning six---that were six---yah---turning six couldn't do some of things that the three-year-olds could at the Preprimary Program. And so I thought, you know,

> that was what threw me into this dilemma. **(Conversation; April 29, 1992, p. 4)**

She felt that she needed to moderate her students' learning by providing some specific activities and at the same time she learned to adapt her philosophy to her teaching. She was beginning to be aware that there were different kinds of learning.

> I thought, "Well, maybe some kids really aren't able to learn on their own. Maybe they just are not capable of active seeking." And I think part of that is---um---the cognitive processing, the background---the family background, their learning style. I have moderated a lot because of, you know, that experience in that huge change that I did---that my whole being fought against. I moderated. So, now I see the children that I are having difficulty being independent, following the ideas through being curious, asking questions, participating. The ones that I am having difficulty, I'm coming at it from a different view now. I try to---instead of controlling their learnings, trying to give them successful experiences and---um---praising their internal locus of control. Like anything that they have done on their own I try to praise that, telling them that, "You are really good." **(Conversation; April 29, 1992, p. 4-5)**

In her teaching, Carol coped with this dilemma by integrating structured activities and free-play activities.

> I learned that you had to have some type of structured time when you had to work with these little ones one-on-one. I know now for Attentional Deficit Disorder you give them one specific instruction, watch to make sure it's done, give them another specific instruction. They cannot handle the open freedom. They just can't pick out what they're supposed to be attending to. They've got so much stimuli that they're taking in. They just can't help it. That is their whole being. So, I changed towards the end of the year. I would have---um---the more group time in the morning where I spend time with them doing math, doing tens and ones together. As a group, we did the reading, the story, and the group reading and group writing and the math. That component was all in the morning. And in the afternoon, I did small groups. I put the ones that were having the most trouble together and we worked on their level of learning and you know, trying to ability group them, move them along. And also attentional grouping. The ones that could attend. The ones that could not attend. And I let them go, instead of trying to all do one page in

> math, I let them go at their own speed. (**Conversation; April 29, 1992, p. 13**)

In the reality of life, there is nothing that comes straightforward from one thing to the other. As I experience life, I experience a lot of things all at once. I feel that there are a lot of details in a person's life which makes his/her life more complicated. The more I look closely at my life, the more I realize how complicated my life is. Life is full of dilemmas. It appears to me that we live our lives through our dilemmas. Our dilemmas of life are not a choice of either one thing or the other. They are so connected that we cannot separate them from the story of life because dilemmas are life. In other words, life is dilemmas. The more Carol reflected on her major dilemma last year, the more she realized that there were a lot of factors that affected the dilemma. She articulated,

> Yah---partly (changing job). Yah, I think so. But part of that was the anxiety of the thesis. The other was moving to a new place and feeling---um---not---insecure---feeling insecure. And then with the group of children compounding that plus a new grade level, you know, there were so many factors last year. (**Conversation; April 15, 1992, p. 18**)

Lyons (1990), in her article "Dilemmas of knowing: Ethical and epistemological dimensions of teachers' work and development," mentioned that fifty-two percent of the teachers she interviewed said that their dilemmas were going on, and most of them indicated that their dilemmas were likely to recur. This also happened to Carol. The dilemma between her philosophy of education and the reality of the children was carried on to her teaching this year. Carol felt that her students were dependent and could not make their own choices. She said,

> And---um---this year I saw the kids coming in at a younger level and still that same kind of dependency like the parents had done and planned for them so long that they couldn't make choices. (**Conversation; March 4, 1992, p. 4**)

From her experiences in coping with her previous year's dilemma, Carol used the same pattern in coping with her dilemma this year. She reflected back on her parenting and her past experiences.

> I think before what I did is I offered open activities without thinking now the child is at a developmental age-two. How does that child interact with what I have here? Or if they're developmentally at eight, how are they going to interact differently? I had it narrower. The age range was, you know, three, four, five, six. And the expectation was that that was O.K. What about if they didn't fit into that range? What about if they were still like a toddler---developmentally eighteen months? When I reflected back on my own parenting, I thought, "Well, if the child was younger, I had a different kind of thing for them so what I had to get through my mind was that child could be seven or eight like last year I had somebody who turned eight in grade one and he was developmentally---um---like a three year old for academic skills but for social skills he was probably an adolescent. **(Conversation; March 4, 1992, p. 4-5)**

She learned to cope with the internal conflicts by broadening her philosophy to cover all her students.

> And so I still believe in my philosophy but just that I have to---I have to broaden it to help the kids that came in very dependent not able to make choices. And so I had to expand it so that I had a wider range covered. **(Conversation; March 4, 1992, p. 4-5)**

At the same time, she facilitated the learning of her students by providing specific activities for them to engage in.

> I had to provide very specific activities or ways for them to engage and focus because their thought process and their attention were so broad that they couldn't zero in on what---the act, you know, what engage learner was like they be off topic off---anything. **(Conversation; March 4, 1992, p. 4)**

When reflecting on her teaching, Carol felt that she brought in more structure to her teaching than when she was at the Preprimary Program. She felt that she compromised her philosophy and did what was "practical" in order to have the day run more smoothly.

> Because I know---compared to my teaching at the Preprimary Program, I became more---brought in some more structure. I work harder at certain things than I used to. I did try to fill more experiences. **(Conversation; January 14, 1992, p. 14)**

She was aware of why she became more structured than when she was at the Preprimary Program. She said,

> But you know, what the kids had the experience there (the Preprimary Program) and so you could go with them. They were self-selecting, independent, internal locus of control. And they were active learners on their own and half of my class were not active learners when they came in. **(Conversation; January 14, 1992, p. 14)**

However, when looking back at her teaching, Carol realized that things could not remain the same. Nothing stands still. She was changing, as was the context of the classroom. She was aware that she could not use exactly the same approach as she taught at the Preprimary Program because the kindergarten children at St. Peter's School were different and the school itself was different.

> I feel good about what I'm doing for the kids. So, I'm not feeling guilty about not using the same thing or exactly doing things the same way because it's a different environment. **(Conversation; January 14, 1992, p. 14-15)**

Our lives are always full of moments of wonder. As Carol lived through her story of teaching, she found that there were a lot of details in her teaching that led to dilemmas. Each of the details created its moments of wondering for her to deal with.

While Carol was teaching the kindergarten children, she was always aware of her past experiences as a first grade teacher. She realized the expectation of the grade one teachers for the kindergartens. She was also conscious of the grade one curriculum which her students had to face the next year.

> But I also---because I taught grade one, I know what these children are going to be facing next year and so I'm doing a lot of enrichment, or stimulation to get their minds a kind of focusing on something too. Like I'll make sure that they have been exposed to the alphabet and hand written letters. But it will be done one on one with their own names with all kinds of other things without being a whole group left or lack or that sort of things. Introduction to books, right? and reading. So, they are familiar with that sort of thing too. **(Conversation; January 6, 1992, p. 9)**

When reflecting on her teaching experiences in grade one, on the background of her students, and from time to time on her philosophy of education, Carol could understand her classroom contexts and she struggled to try to find ways to help her students meet her expectations.

> I know the grade one curriculum and I know how some of those kids came in. They didn't have a sense of story. They didn't understand the function of print. They didn't expect themselves to be successful learners. You know, a lot of things like that. So, that's what I try to do this year---build a lot of foundation so that next year when they go into grade one, they all have background. I believe that every child is walking on their own time line that you're never going to have all the children at the same place. Even when I'm doing the story, there is maybe a third of the kids answer my questions, another third they didn't even listen to me. And another third that are thinking "Oh! I wonder how they figure that out. Oh! I wonder what she means." You know, they just building awareness right now and some of them started there and they're moving along. And the other haven't reached that yet. Maybe by the end of the year some of them were just waking up. **(Conversation; February 4, 1992, p. 7)**

As Carol reflected upon her story of teaching, she felt that at the beginning of the year she struggled with trying to find ways to teach reading and writing to the children.

> I've seen it in some classes where they have a letter of the week. And it just makes me cringe because they spend all this time teaching one letter and half the class knows the whole alphabet backward and forward. And other kids haven't even learnt how to hold their pencil yet, you know.

> So, I struggled with trying to find a way that it wouldn't be boring for the ones that knew it but would get the other ones prompted and you know, some class excitement and so. That's---it's kind of just came---well, I was searching. **(Conversation; January 14, 1992, p. 11)**

She negotiated her way by trying to find a compromise that matched her teaching with her philosophy and the children's needs. She tried to put reading and writing into play which matched her philosophy.

> You have to think about things for---well, I have to. There's a problem in my mind. And it stays there until I find the way to put them into play that matches my philosophy. I know that I need to coach these kids on letters that's what I know I need to do to get---them---better set up for grade one. I don't want them to be at a disadvantage. And yet I don't want to do it with teacher-directed or didactic. I wanted to be light and fun. So, you know, that's what I've been wrestling with in my mind for a long time. **(Conversation; January 14, 1992, p. 11)**

One of the routines in Carol's classroom was teaching about the calendar and patterns. Carol spent less than a minute in teaching about the calendar and patterns. She said,

> I reluctantly brought that in this year by using a real calendar and focusing just for a minute period of time. To me, I've seen so many misuses of calendar that I almost rejected it in entirely and I had to rethink it. I thought, "No, it still has its purpose but it has to be a meaningful way to use it." So, I brought a nature calendar and introduced a patterning concept so they were learning the names of the months so they are beginning to have the language to describe time. Because time, making a comprehension of time, is beyond them. They don't have any way to fathom it. It's too far, too abstract a concept. So, I couldn't see spending much time. But by getting the sequence of number. They are hearing the numbers going in order and they are learning the days, the weeks, and the months. **(Conversation; April 22, 1992, p. 6)**

Carol struggled with trying to find the ways to teach patterns to her children which matched her philosophy and the background of the children.

> Most of them didn't have an idea about patterns. So, I thought I'm going to have to make it more formal. Other times when I introduced patterns, I prompted by putting out materials in a pattern and encouraging the children to continue. Like red blue, red blue. I thought somebody would come and continue it but they weren't doing that. They didn't see it. It wasn't obvious to them. **(Conversation; January 14, 1992, p. 12)**

After trying to manage her dilemma, Carol found out that

> When I did that this year, now it's the beginning of March and I put hardly any activities out because the kids are getting so good at self-selecting and changing their peer group. You know, they are not locking themselves into one friend. They're changing and learning. So secure, emotional development. They are engaging in a deeper level so intellectually they are creative, far more creative, than they were in September. And so, it affirms my philosophy again. **(Conversation; March 4, 1992, p. 5)**

Carol's practice of teaching reflected her ways of managing her dilemmas. Her strong background in children's literature, along with her love of writing, was the focus of her program. At the beginning of my visits, Carol read stories to her students without focusing on the words or the sounds of the letters. She focused only on the content of the stories and raised a lot of questions to make sure that her children understood the stories. When Carol was reading The Little Match Girl written by Hans Christian Anderson and illustrated by Rachel Isadora, she asked questions such as "How could she (the little match girl) see?," "Where did her grandmother come from?" She raised questions to make sure that her students understood the meaning of the words in a story, for example, "What does 'fetch' mean?"

During my early visits, some of the children could not give their full attention to the stories she read to them. Some of them were playing with each other or looking at other books. Carol realized this was a dilemma and tried to use different approaches to deal with it by calling their names over and over. Sometimes she had to be patient with them and she sometimes reinforced their proper behaviors. She said,

> But you know, getting them to attend during story time was the same problem I had in the large group in grade one. How do you get these kids that can't focus or don't, you know. How do you get them to attend? And I learned just saying the same things over and over, just being patient, just keep calling them back, reinforces the proper behavior. They come along and get into the story when I use lots of drama, use the story itself to hold attention. **(Conversation; January 27, 1992, p. 7)**

Carol tried to help her students develop an awareness of "I can read" and tried to encourage them to notice the difference of each letter. In my fieldnotes about one of my early visits in her classroom, I recorded,

> Carol pointed at the names of the wolves' stories on the board and asked the children to read them. She asked them, "What does it say? (Wolf Stories)" Then she let them read the names of the stories one by one.
>
> The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids
> Little Red Riding Hood
> Lon Po Po
> The Three Little Pigs
> The True Story of the Three Little Pigs
>
> After that Carol showed her students the storybook that she was going to read to them today. She pointed at the letter P at the front of the book and asked,

Teacher:	The name starts with this (pointed at the letter P) What is it?
Children:	B
Teacher:	The B had two tummies. This has one. What is it?
Children:	P
Teacher:	The name of the story is Peter and the Wolf.
Jeff:	My last name starts with P.
Teacher:	What's your last name?
Jeff:	Hopkins
Teacher:	It has P in it.

> Then she let the children talk about their experiences for a while. After that she asked them, "Whose name starts with 'P'?" Then she began to read the story to the children. She read the name of the illustrator first. When the children began to play and didn't look at her, Carol said, "I

> think it's hard on Monday morning after the weekend." Then she continued reading the story to the children. While she was reading the story, Carol made her voice sound like the actors in the story. She also asked questions so the children could think along with the story. She sometimes stopped reading and let the children guess a word. For example, she stopped at a sentence where she was quite sure that her students could guess the word. She pointed at the word and asked, "Here's the word. It starts with a 'z'. (z-z-z)" Since the dedication of this book was in the back cover, Carol asked her students, "The dedication is always at the back?" **(Fieldnotes; January 13, 1992)**

As the year went by, Carol tried to focus more on words and to help her students make connections between the words and the sounds or the letters and their sounds. She tried to integrate reading and writing into the context of the classroom. For example, when Carol asked her students whose turn it was to take an attendance slip to the central office, she showed the connections between the word and its sound to her students in the following way.

Carol: Last week we ended up with "K." We have to start with "l." Whose last name is "L"?

Roberta: George Loo

Carol: Yes. His last name is "Loo." It was almost the same as zoo.

Then she wrote down George's last name and the word "zoo" to show the children how similar these two words were. Then she asked George to take the attendance slip down to the central office **(Fieldnotes; January 20, 1992)**.

For writing, Carol gave each of her students a book which she called a "journal." The children could draw or write in their journals, whenever they wanted. She also set up a specific activity to help her students learn to write. She taught them all at the same time in the book area. She picked up the letters that related to the theme or the stories the children were learning. For example, when she read the stories about "wolf" to the children, she picked up the letter "W" and "F" to teach her students. In one of my fieldnotes, I recorded,

> The children gathered in the book area. They also brought their journals with them and some of them began to write something down. Some drew pictures. I heard a little boy tell Carol, "Mrs. Rawlings, I'm going to write a picture." His teacher said, "O.K. Go ahead." She let the children write in their journals for a while. After that she told them, "We are going to practice 'W'. Do you know why? (Since it's in Wolf)" Carol showed her students how to write "W" both in capital letter and in small letter. She asked her students,
>
> Teacher: What's the name of the letter?
> Children: W
> Teacher: "W" for what?
> Children: Wolf.
>
> Carol explained to her students how to write "W." She said, "You start at the top and go down and up and down and up." Then she let them practice in their journals. She talked to them while they were writing,
>
> Teacher: Do you know how you can be good at writing?
> Children: Practice.
> Teacher: Yes. You need to practice.
>
> After that Carol picked up the letter "F" for her students to write it down. She told them that she picked up the letter "F" because it was in "Wolf." She showed them how to write "F" both in capital letter and in small letter. **(Fieldnotes; January 13, 1992)**

Carol always encouraged her students to be aware of the purpose of writing. She encouraged her students to do group-writing by letting them dictate and then she wrote for them. While I was in her classroom, the children wrote many letters to their parents and they made a big storybook. At the beginning of March, Carol began to integrate reading and writing into other activities in her classroom. When she taught about the calendar and the pattern, she helped her students make connections between the sound and the letters. In my fieldnotes, I wrote,

> Carol and the children worked on calendar and pattern as usual. She began her lesson by asking the children about the name of the month. When the children said, "March," she stressed the sound /ch/. She gave the examples of the words that had /ch/ sound at the beginning or at the end of the words to the children such as Charles. Then the children gave the examples of the word with /ch/ sound such as "Charlie" and "church." **(Fieldnotes; March 4, 1992)**

By the end of the school year, the children showed progress in both their reading and their writing. They loved reading and listening to stories. The children recognized different kinds of stories that Carol read to them. Carol was aware of the difference that she made in her students' lives. She said,

> I think so, yah. Even the tone of this morning was much different than yesterday. Yesterday got really hectic. They (the children) were still better---better than yesterday and the day before. So, it's going to take a lot of time and I have to bring them more stories and more stories, you know, because they understand through literature. **(Conversation; March 25, 1992, p. 9)**

During my later visits, I saw them looking at story books and pretending to read. Carol encouraged them to read more by themselves during the story time. She brought in different types of storybooks to read to her students. Some of them began to realize that they could read by themselves. For example, during one story time in the middle of April Carol showed a story book to her students and asked them to guess the story's name, Emily said, Seven Little Rabbits. Her teacher asked her, "How do you know that it said, 'Seven Little Rabbits'?" Emily pointed at the title of the story and said, "Since it said, 'Seven Little Rabbits'." Therefore, Carol told the children, "When you look at letters like this, if it's a certain pattern then you know what the word is." After that she pronounced the sounds of each beginning letter of the story's name to her students **(Fieldnotes; April 15, 1992)**.

When, at the end of the school year, I asked Carol to reflect on her teaching, she realized that she tried to build in some more reading and writing to prepare her students to be ready for grade one. From her past experiences of teaching grade one, she wanted to build metacognitive awareness for her students.

> I remember that last year when I had grade one, there were so many kids that were not ready. I mean they were not prepared---not physically developmentally ready because the the age limit is where they are, but mentally not ready. They didn't have any idea what was going to be happening and---um---they were distant from the learning that they needed to sound the letters, sound connection. It was so easy to do those things and play early like today when I was doing "Seven Little Rabbits" with the title Seven Little Rabbits---um---Emily decoded it completely on her own. She read it. I tried to draw out from her---her strategy that she used. I was getting her to verbalize for the other children---the thinking process like having to build metacognitive awareness and those things can be done ahead of time before they are moving into grade one. So, it's inside so you know, the questioning, the preparation was always there in their minds, the strategy and place. So, I go, "Oh! yah. How can I know that?" done in an oral level. **(Conversation; April 15, 1992, p. 8)**

I noticed that the children did a lot of writing on their own. They used writing purposefully. For example, some of them wrote letters to their parents. They wrote their names every time that they finished their art work. Some of them began to integrate their writing into their play. For example, they brought their journals with them to the "house" area and wrote when they talked on the phone. When I mentioned the children's progress to Carol, she said,

> Yah---yah, they have. Anita has been in that block area a lot and they (the children) brought their journals in there a few times. There are still some children that aren't at that stage of development yet, though in the block play or other play. **(Conversation; April 22, 1992, p. 9)**

The children showed a lot of progress in their play with blocks. On my early visits, the children hardly went to the block area. I saw only a few children playing there.

I noticed that they spent very short periods of time in the block area. In my fieldnotes, I wrote:

> When I went to observe the children in the big block area, there was only a little girl playing with animal toys in the area. She played for a few minutes and then she left. **(Fieldnotes; January 7, 1992)**

When I mentioned it to Carol, she said,

> I know---I know. It's a little strange. I don't believe it. When I went to do the visiting in the other classroom, you know, the typical thing just like in the Preprimary Program they really do supportive straight to the block and they played just like at the Preprimary Program but here I can't get those to stick in there. We did---um---they were interested in fire stations, fire engines, and little things. So, we built in a group. I had to be in there and playing with them so they could build the fire truck. They couldn't even---didn't even know how to do it. They set one block down and sat down on it and that was their truck. You know,---where they are developmentally like two-year-olds or three-year-olds. But to put it together and construct it, they can't even make a simple closure or not even a flat stage or not even together. It was just a seat. And that's all they can do. **(Conversation; January 7, 1992, p. 12-13)**

On my later visits in the classroom, I noticed that the children went to play at the big block area more often than before. Their playing at the block area began to be more complicated as they experienced a lot of things in their lives. They used blocks to build a lot of things from their imagination and from what they experienced both in the stories they heard and in their everyday lives. For example, they used blocks to build a stage so they could sing. Some days they built a "castle" and pretended to be "king" and "queen." At one time, they used blocks to build a "coffin." Their conversations in their play with blocks on that day were very interesting and it showed how complicated they were at the end of the year. Their play with blocks on that day showed a lot of progress in their learning and how they made sense of the world around them. The children integrated reading and writing in their play very well. They showed the development of their language. As an adult in their classroom, I felt that I learned a lot from observing them in their play with blocks on that day. I could see how the children built their ideas and how they made a transition from one theme to another. In my fieldnotes, I recorded,

> I went to observe the children in the block area. At first I saw Ingrid and Jeff talk on the phone. They brought their journals with them and wrote when they talked on the phone. Then I went to observe Carol playing the alphabet game with the children. When I came back, I saw Jeff and Ingrid put blocks over their bodies and lay down on the floor. Shawn came in and talked to Jeff. Jeff told him to see the scar on his forehead. Then Shawn lay down and put blocks on his body. Anita came in and pretended to be a doctor and examined other children. Ingrid said, "We are dead."
>
> Then all of them began to build a coffin. They used a lot of blocks to build the coffin. After they built the coffin, Ingrid lay down in the coffin. Shawn said, "We have to bury her." After that they helped each other bury Ingrid. When Shawn saw me, he said, "We pretend and Ingrid is in the coffin." Anita wanted to lie down in the coffin. Therefore, they decided that they should make a bigger coffin. While they were building the coffin, I talked to Ingrid.
>
> Nophanet: What is the coffin for?
>
> Ingrid: It's for when people die.
>
> Jeff: Grave.
>
> Ingrid: Yah.
>
> Nophanet: Where did people go when they died?
>
> Ingrid: In the grave yard.
>
> After that Ingrid and Anita lay down in the coffin. I asked Shawn.
>
> Nophanet: What did they do inside?
>
> Shawn: They were buried.
>
> Then Shawn lay down in the coffin. While building the coffin, Jeff said,
>
> Jeff: Is it nice and dark there?

> Shawn: No.
>
> Jeff: It should be. I'll build again.
>
> Jeff continued building the coffin for a while. Then he said, "Here's the back door." Ingrid came out of the coffin. Jeff pretended that he was driving. He asked Ingrid to drive at the front of the coffin. Then Ingrid said, "Let's build an airplane on the top of the 'coffin'." When Ingrid began to take some blocks out, one of the blocks hit Shawn's face. Shawn cried. Ingrid apologized him. After he stopped crying, he didn't want to get out of the coffin. He was still lying down. Ingrid left to do writing at the writing center. **(Fieldnotes; April 22, 1992)**

Carol was aware of her students' progress in block play, she articulated,

> (the children's play are) very deep---concept. Yah, and even their social---the social development like their social type of play and there is motor type of play and the cognitive levels of play. So, if we are looking only at a social level and they were not playing alone. They were interacting with others and co-operating so it's co-operative play, that's the highest degree moving the play along by the input of other people. It flowed. **(Conversation; April 22, 1992, p. 9)**

Different from other levels in schools, the curriculum in a kindergarten classroom was not all pre-planned for a teacher to teach. The school board offered kindergarten teachers freedom to develop the curriculum for their children. They gave only a guideline book for kindergarten teachers to follow.

> I mean---the only one that I followed was the one that for Early Childhood is---Philosophy, Goals, Program Dimensions. So, it's development for the whole child---social, physical, intellectual, creative, and emotional, right? That's what I'm using. **(Conversation; January, 6, 1992, p.9)**

However, kindergarten classrooms were a part of the school community and kindergarten teachers could not separate themselves from being a part of the school. As with many teachers in schools, Carol struggled with a fundamental dilemma over what content should be presented and how it should be taught to her students (Lyons, 1990).

From her experiences of being a mother and a beginning teacher, Carol became aware that the curriculum in her classroom should emerge from the children. Therefore, when she thought about her classroom curriculum, she tried to look from the children's standpoint.

> It (curriculum) had to come from the kids' world first (laugh). That's where it had to originate, that type of curiosity or interest so I have to take---O.K. where they are at. I have to try and be in their shoes, like take their perspective of the child and think "Is this going to be meaningful for me? If I were a child and here would this be meaningful?" **(Conversation; April 22, 1992, p. 15)**

She always looked at the children's background and tried to build her teaching to their background.

> I feel so good after---after Christmas when I got everything organized and talked about what were happening at every area, you know. Knowing where the kids are coming from, know where and how they play like. I make sure the house area are really big because we have a lot of children that need to play that. **(Conversation; January 7, 1992, p. 15)**

Carol was involved in a pilot project about teaching religion to young children where the school board offered different kinds of themes and activities for teachers to work with. Teachers could choose what they wanted to build on in order to relate it to what they were doing.

> This is a pilot project that they (the school board) are running. They put together a whole new religious package. It's a---they've got different themes and they've got about four or five activities for each one. It's a kind of nice because they're all in binder. And I can choose what I want to bring in according to what I'm doing. **(Conversation; January 21, 1992, p. 14)**

Carol also felt that a lot of themes in the religion pilot project fit with her style of teaching because they were based on nature. However, when she pulled out a theme to develop in her classroom, Carol always looked at where her students were first.

> I'm a teacher involved in using their units and a lot of it is based on nature so a lot of it fits in with my style of teaching or for the learning for the classroom. When I go to look at a unit, I'll flip through and find something of where the kids are at, pull it out and look at what they have and sometimes they have really good ideas so I'll bring them out and develop them because I know that they will fit in with these kids. But it's not like O.K. ho hum what shall I pick today? This is what the children are going to learn---teach and this and this and this. And they have to do this and this and this. That isn't how I do it. It's like I look at here's some of the options. We can probably try this. The children might like to do that---um---"Well, I'll try that." I'll bring out some of the materials and give them their choice if they want to they can, you know, it's different. It's like "Well, this might work from the child's point of view." So, it's different than saying everybody has to. **(Conversation; April 22, 1992, p. 16)**

When the religion coordinator suggested the teachers set up a sleep-over for children to learn about "the night sky" in June, Carol decided to set it up at the end of February because she felt that it was getting dark early. Therefore, the children would have enough time to go outside and celebrate the night.

> They (religion coordinators) suggested that you do it at the end of the year in June when the kids know each other very well. But to me it fitted more now than it would at the end of June because it's much more light then. And now it's still getting dark earlier, by seven o'clock. And so there will be enough time to go outside and look and enjoy and appreciate, you know. **(Conversation; February 18, 1992, p. 8)**

She also looked at her children's readiness when she was making a decision about having the sleep-over at the end of February.

> But now I feel really right. The kids are---they know each other. They just celebrated friendships and love and Valentine's Day. They're really caring towards each other. And I think that it will be a bond that will form.

> Everybody is close together now. **(Conversation; February 18, 1992, p. 10)**

Curriculum in Carol's classroom emerged from the children. On my early visits, Carol built in a theme on "multi-culturalism" because the children in the classroom came from different cultures. For example, George came from a Chinese family. Allan and Peter immigrated from Chile, and Allan could not communicate in English very well. Carol recognized the background of each of her students, she said,

> And you can tell during story time, he (Peter) doesn't have the language pattern. They're--they're---not as rich nor the English story patterns because he had a hard time listening and attending. And it's the same as Allan. **(Conversation; January 7, 1992, p. 11)**

When the children learned to count, Carol encouraged them to count in their mother tongue. At the same time, she learned from her students to count in different languages. She shared her family background with her students by telling them that her grandfather and great-grandfather came from Sweden and her grandmother came from Norway (**Fieldnotes; January 14, 1992**). She brought books, food, and pictures from Sweden to share with the children. In my fieldnotes, I recorded,

> When I went into the classroom, the first thing I noticed was a display about Sweden. It was beautiful. Carol brought in three trolls, a lot of books and pictures about Sweden, Sweden's flag, some souvenirs, and Swedish bread. **(Fieldnotes; January 28, 1992)**

She brought in different kinds of stories from around the world to read to her students, for example, Moja means one: Swahili Counting Book written by Muriel Feelings and pictures by Tom Feelings. On Chinese's New Year, Carol read two stories about China to her students. One of them was The Story about Ping written by Marjorie Flack. The other one was Chin Chiang and the Dragon's Danu written and illustrated by Ian Wallace. She encouraged the children to celebrate the Chinese's New Year by asking them to decorate a dragon. She gave the children a long piece of paper and let them decorate it. On that day she and the children helped each other cook Chinese fried rice, then she let them watch the movie that George's father brought in. The movie was about the celebration of Chinese New Year. Before the children went home, Carol asked them to stand in line. She put the piece of paper that they decorated on top of them and let them dance like a dragon. Carol played a music instrument while the children were walking around the school (**Fieldnotes; February 4, 1992**).

Carol also encouraged the parents to participate in their children's learning. "It's an open door policy. They (parents) can come in when they want" (**Conversation; January 7, 1992, p. 10**). She believed that parents should be involved in their children's learning. She always shared her understanding of the children and their learning with them. "I'll try to show them (parents) the wonderful things that had been happening in the room" (**Conversation; January 14, p. 10**). During my visits, Carol sent many newsletters to the parents to share what was going on in the classroom. Carol posted daily plans on the parent board in front of the classroom to keep the parents informed and involved in her program.

During the multicultural theme, Carol encouraged the children to write a letter as a group to their parents to invite them to join the classroom's activities. Their process of writing a letter to their parents was very interesting. Carol integrated reading and writing in the process very well. In my fieldnotes, I wrote,

> Before writing a letter, Carol talked about people who came from different countries in the world. She told the children that her grandfather and great-grandfather and her grandmother came from Norway. Then she told the children that their moms or dads or grandfathers or great-grandfathers might come from other countries.
>
> Carol: What are we interested in?
>
> Children: We're interested in counting in different languages.
>
> Carol: What are we wondering?

> Children: We're wondering about what country our family came from.
>
> The children participated in writing a letter very well. They dictated and their teacher wrote for them. Carol used a lot of questions to encourage them to think about the contents of the letter. After finishing the letter, Carol asked Nancy, her assistant teacher, to write it down in a small piece of paper so the children could sign their names. **(Fieldnotes; January 14, 1992)**

There were a lot of parents coming in to share their cultures with the children. For example, Emily's mother came in to teach the children to count to ten in Ukrainian. Ingrid's father "wore tartan" to the classroom, and played his bagpipe for the children. He shared a story about his "tartan" **(Fieldnotes; February 10, 1992)**.

During the multi-cultural theme, I had an opportunity to share a story about my country with the children. I was very excited on that day. The way I recorded in my fieldnotes was different. I noticed the details of each child more than on the other days. I saw the children from the perspective of a teacher. However, I realized that I took notes less than the other days because I didn't have time to write down as much. I recorded,

> I reached the school at 8:20 today. I felt excited since I had to talk to the children about my country. I saw a television in the book area which Carol prepared for me. Some of the children came in and asked about the television. They sat in the book area and put their name cards in a basket. When Carol came in, the children asked her about the television. They didn't seem to be ready for their study. They still looked at books and talked to each other. Carol tried to make them calm down but they didn't seem to be interested in what she tried to say. Shawn talked a lot and tried to persuade his teacher to look at a cartoon book that he brought in. Carol told him to put the cartoon back and told him that he could look at it after the circle activity. However, he didn't listen to his teacher and keep interrupting other children. **(Fieldnotes; February 11, 1992)**

Even though Carol tried to develop the curriculum in her classroom from the children, it sometimes led her to other dilemmas when she realized nothing new was coming from the children with which she could create a curriculum.

> And perhaps it's because last week we were kind of---finishing off a lot of things. The bears were finishing---the night sky was finishing---a lot of things---a kind of dead ending now. And there is nothing new showing up in their play to create a new idea or to develop more. It's a kind of game and repetitive play. **(Conversation; March 18, 1992, p. 13)**

Carol again reflected back to her philosophy. As a kindergarten teacher, Carol believed that curriculum planning should be based on teachers' observations and recordings of each child's special interests and developmental progress. She believed, therefore, that teachers should spend most of their time in the classrooms observing and interacting with the children.

> When I was visiting the other teacher, she was active maybe half the time with kids. The other half she was busy doing things on the board, preparing materials. She wasn't observing. She was doing other things. To me, those should be done after part time. When the kids were there, you should be there and interacting with them, you know. I think, what your role is as an adult is there to stimulate, to observe, to get to know the kids to find ways---helping them move on, to find what their interests are, to expand and develop all the time, you know, to intervene, play with, to be there, to be present to them. **(Conversation; January 14, 1992, p. 18)**

Carol realized more how important her role was when the counseling psychologist came to talk to her about one of her students.

> I feel anxiety. I can recognize stress symptom. Um---like I want to talk to the professional, you know....that comes in to the room like the counseling psychologist because I want to get as much feedback as I can about how to help the kids the most and---the more information they can give me the better I know how to deal with them. So---but at the same time if I'm not attending to what is going on in the room. Then they get more chaotic so it's kind of a catch twenty-two today. There were so many interruptions that I

> needed to talk with them. So, the kids were on their own more. And I realize how important your role is. Even just being and settled with the kids and maybe not doing much but attending to them, watching them. That's make the difference in the behavior. We can catch things earlier. You know, you can intervene and, change potentially negative situations earlier. **(Conversation; January 20, 1992, p. 20)**

As a person who was in the classroom with the teacher, I also felt the same thing as Carol. In my journal entry on that day, I wrote,

> The classroom seemed to be hectic today. As Carol said, she wanted to talk to the psychologist but the children still wanted her. I could see that. When Carol wasn't around, the children began to get into an argument with each other. I thought that sometimes the children needed to have somebody around them to compromise their ideas with their friends. **(Journal; January 20, 1992)**

By reflecting on her role as a teacher, Carol could manage her dilemma.

> And---now that I've seen the gold (see below) going. That's a new area then just to develop and so, that made me feel more positive too because it's something to go with from the kids. **(Conversation; March 18, 1992, p. 13)**

In her teaching, Carol was happy every time her students developed another area of interest. For example, Carol had a teaching activity related to St. Patrick's Day. When the children started to be interested in hiding "Gold" after St. Patrick's Day, Carol was very excited.

> [It was] the magic that was in the school yesterday from St. Patrick's Day, the leprechaun that carried over. My ears were ringing at the end of the morning---(laugh)---so full of excited chatter, and squeal of delight, and calling out to each other with all their leprechaun discoverings and gold and whatever else. But by the time the kids went home, my ears were just ringing but I think that day gave me a real up too. It brought my spirit up because I could join in the play with them. **(Conversation; March 18, 1992, p. 12-13)**

She encouraged the children to develop a new theme in their learning by providing different kinds of materials for them to engage in and then she watched for their interests.

> I'm happy because actually it's made me alive in the room as the kids developed another area of interest. It happened, I think, kicked off from St. Patrick's Day last week. When they started to make the gold and I thought "Gold---gold." We are working just gold because it consumed them. They were so excited and driving to do this. And it was like it was searching for a place to develop so over the weekend, you know, I was thinking all the time what might go into the fairy tales, it might go into a store or money. I tried to find ways for it to continue because it was such a strong interest. When I haven't seen strong interest in the classroom for a long time. Like the bear was a kind of a subsidiary. It wasn't all consuming. It wasn't dynamic. It wasn't powerful like the gold was. And so I thought, "Well, if it is the castle fairy tales theme then if I provided some props like the capes and royalty and things like that the dress then we'll see and if it grows strong then I'll go that way." Otherwise, I will put out some little things for store how that would go to but as soon as they saw those clothes. They were dressed up and I had designed those things for capes, you know, to wear as cloaks and they're wearing them as skirts (laugh) and so they are far more creative. Some of them were wearing three veils on at one time and all these gauzy things hanging down their backs and the boys too, you know, they just put them on and really just fit right in with the play and I asked---yesterday---um---I knew that the space things the night sky didn't really belong anymore so I asked one of my grade six helpers, "If you could take it down so I can save it for another year." and I came in the next day and that wall looked so awful. It was so bright. It was just a kind of draws you because it was empty and awful and I said, "What can I do up there it just look so awful and empty. What do you think?" "Um---well, it could prob.....probably put something that would go with the king and queen and princess and---" "Like what?" "Castle" which is where I was leading them to. You know, that's what I had in my mind. **(Conversation; March 25, 1992, p. 4-5)**

The ways in which Carol managed her dilemmas of teaching reminded me of what practitioners did when they realized that the situation they faced was unique and uncertain (Schon, 1987). Carol did not handle her dilemmas solely by applying theories she learned from the university. She reflected back to her experiences as a mother and teacher, and then she reflected on the background of the children, her philosophy of education, and the theories she learned.

Carol was always aware that her past experiences of working on sales with the women and being the oldest in her family affected the way she treated the children in her classroom. She felt that she tried to encourage the boys to listen and share their feelings more with the group.

> A lot of the time the women had low self-efficacy because their husbands were very assertive and controlling. Like often I'd go to interview a woman and she'd said, "Yah, that's sound like so much fun. I can probably do this. I like to go to give it a try. But I have to talk to my husband first." So, then I called back the next day and said, "How did it go? What did your husband think?" "He didn't want me to do it." "Hm---not even on a part time basis for your own." "No, I can't do it. I got to go." And they'd hang up. They'd take what their husbands said and stop. And so......the way I treat boys is different too. I get them to be respectful and---learn to listen and share feeling and treat women differently. So, it affected the way I treat both of them---different---you see what I mean. **(Conversation; February 11, 1992, p. 10-11)**

As the oldest girl in her family and from having a brother, Carol felt that she was treated differently by her parents. Therefore, she tried to empower the girls just a little more than the boys.

> I'm a girl and I had a brother that came second and my brother got to do things that I didn't get to do because I was a girl. I was treated differently. And I don't want that to happen without girls at least having a choice and options so I try to empower them just a little more than I do the boys. **(Conversation; April 22, 1992, p. 24)**

Carol tried to help the girls in her classroom to be more assertive. She felt that she was especially sensitive to the girls that did not feel capable and she tried to encourage them to accomplish and do something a little more challenging.

> But sometimes I find myself though in a one-on-one situation and there will be the opportunity for a child who said, "No, I don't want to." And I will work with that

> child more to bring them up, to move their empowerment up, you know what I mean. I will do it more with girls than I do with boys. **(Conversation; April 22, 1992, p. 21)**

However, when Carol reflected on her past experiences, she viewed herself as a humanist not a feminist.

> Yes, I agree that we should be treated with as much dignity. Actually I thought for a while like I had a period of years about five years in a row that I was really angry about being---about the female having a less significant role of---um---not having equal opportunity because I was out in a work place. I thought all the times and when I was talking with these women asking them if they would like to do a job and they said, "Yes, I like to do a job." And they called me the next morning and said, "Sorry, I can't do it. My husband said,'No'." I said, "What about you? Don't you think you have a voice?" "Wow, it's---No." You know, and they would back off. They wouldn't even acknowledge that they were under control. And it was so sad for me because---um---somebody rich opportunity for them to develop and grow so there was a period of time I was very angry and strong very strong opinion. And I be out with Chris's family or my family and I verbalized it and but then it changed. The anger went and the new awareness came forward that it wasn't just for a woman because I felt myself for other causes too. It was for the case of the human---of a human so I called myself a humanist not a feminist. O.K. I'll defend anybody that needs defending that's getting a raw deal. Each person should be treated with respect and dignity and that's different than being a feminist when you are teaching young boys because you can be angry at the boys and you push them back all the times. I don't do that. **(Conversation; April 22, 1992, p. 25)**

To me, life was full of uncertainty and it was more complicated than I thought it should be. It always made me question and wonder and sometimes I ended up by saying, "Why it (life) has to be that way? I don't understand." Many times, I can't find the answer to life. Life might not need a "perfect" answer or the "final" answer, but it needs to be managed from time to time.

Teaching is the same as life. It is full of uncertainty and there is no final answer or perfect rule to govern every teaching situation. Teachers need to keep asking themselves again and again about their teaching. When Carol manages one teaching dilemma, another dilemma emerges. It makes her question and wonder about her teaching.

> It (dilemma) should be great if it was all up front. If you knew ahead of time what you needed to do. (laugh) But you don't always know what you need to be doing. You try your best. You think you're doing the right things. But you're always questioning yourself---always. **(Conversation; March 18, 1992, p. 17)**

Carol viewed dilemmas as something that went on in teaching and teachers needed to learn to cope with them day by day. Even though she found that the children in her classroom were getting better and better, she felt that she needed to learn to adapt herself again to be flexible to the group of the children.

She said,

> Well, now there's new things happening though because they (the children) are getting more used to choice and---um---feeling independent. So, now if it's too long in large group or---um---they make a choice that they want to go and play then I'm getting it rumbling like their loud expressions of disapproval. "I don't want to be doing this now. I want to be doing---" So, I have to learn, you know, to---um---"That's O.K. This is a sign of growth....not that....what's happening to these kids. They used to be so good." But they're better and they are able to express now, gaining independence. It's just me and my response, you know, thinking---well---this is better that they are quiet here that I want them to be exploring here. Well, that doesn't go one way or the other. They're growing on all dimensions all the time. So, it means that I need to learn to adapt again being flexible to the group going with them. **(Conversation; March 4, 1992, p. 6)**

She, also, believes that when we find ways to live with one dilemma, another dilemma emerges. And we need to reflect again and again on our actions. She notes,

> (Dilemmas are going on) All the time. Testing and to get---check the---the feedback. Test again, check the feedback. See where it is going in all that. **(Conversation; March 25, 1992, p. 11)**

Carol feels that when she has dilemmas, she needs to have somebody to talk to, in order to reflect on the situation. But the way to cope with the dilemmas has to come from herself, not from anybody else. She can listen to what her colleagues suggest, but the way to cope with it has to be her way.

> I talked to Mark last year. I talked to Tina last year and I felt like I trust them both. And then I started to talk to Merle so I could talk to---I talked to Ken. I talked to Monda about it and Annie. I was just getting feedback and reaction and what everyone of them said, I took in and heard it but it wasn't their answers. It had to be from me. It was just like a way to articulate it or put words to it or explained why was it this bad feeling up there or good feeling, you know, like why is this working (laugh). I didn't expect it, you know, and unexpected responses were dilemmas too in a way. **(Conversation; March 25, 1992, p. 15)**

I felt the same as Carol. Therefore, when I had a personal dilemma, I reflected on it by writing a journal entry to Dr. Jean Clandinin, a committee member. I realized that most of the dilemmas I had encountered came from my own mind. Most of them were internal dilemmas. I began to realize that the way I could cope with my dilemmas was to think and reflect on my thoughts. In my journal to Jean, I wrote,

> I began to think about teachers' dilemmas. Where did the dilemmas come from? During this time, I was awakened that most of the dilemmas in our lives came from our "minds." I said this because I had been thinking through my dilemma today and found that it came from myself especially my "mind." I guess that most of the dilemmas could be managed with through thinking and reflecting on the mind as well. Jean! sometimes we could not change our environment, right? Therefore, I thought that we needed to change our "minds." Most of the time dilemmas occured because we fixed our "minds" to things or what we always called our "expectations." I realized that I felt bad because I did not like the ways things and people were. They did not go the way I expected. I got hurt. And the way I tried to cope with this dilemma was I had to ask myself why I was upset. Also what I thought who I was created more dilemmas. **(Journal; July 6, 1992)**

Carol read a story about war and death to her students. When she brought this story to her writing class and read it to her classmates, most of her friends in that class said, "I would never read that to my child. I wouldn't even take it out of the library. My child does not need to know that." Therefore, Carol began to question her teaching. She said,

> And I thought, "Have I gotten so hard that I'm not sensitive to children anymore?" But at the same time these children asked for that book, "Can you read that one again? Can you read it again?" So, it's like they're trying to share a death experience in a safe environment---distant from them but yet these parents are saying, "No, this is wrong. It's not good for kids." **(Conversation; March 4, 1992, p. 7)**

However, during that time one of the grade six students in Carol's school committed suicide. As she reflected on her teaching and the situation that happened in the school, Carol was glad that she had read the story about death to the children. Even though the children might not connect with what happened in the school to the story she read to them, Carol felt that it was important for them to begin to be aware of death as a part of life.

> I have been thinking about that and then---you know---the last couple of days---since the suicide in our school. I'm thinking, "How wise I was to give my class a chance to explore? Like I'm sure they haven't connected the elephant story with what's happening here (suicide) but my class was very calm and we did something positively. We wrote a prayer. And to me, that's healthy. This protective---protection isn't of---um---keeping the kids naive and thinking that the world is beautiful and ideal. They can just be devastated by something that happens---out of the blue and unexpected and that's what life is. But this is totally from one thing to another. **(Conversation; March 4, 1992, p. 7)**

Carol was aware of the nature of life. She realized that her students needed to be prepared to face the reality of life. No one could live forever. He/she would die some day. All living things were born, grow, decay, and die. If the children were prepared to see the reality of life, she believed that they would not be devastated by it. Carol, again, reflected on her personal experience of the death of her grandmother.

> If you expect it, you can have some preparedness. But not if it's unexpected. My grandmother was sick for about four days but she had been in the hospital but it took four days for her to die. So, we all knew that there was no recovery and so we have a chance to remember and remember and then when she did go---you know, it was O.K. you know, it's time. And it was like a gentle good-bye. **(Conversation; March 4, 1992 p. 10)**

Death was a part of life. And we need to let our children feel pain and face the reality. We could provide an environment for them to experience death and grow from it. By talking about her personal experience of death, it led Carol to reflect on her provision of pets in the classroom.

> And again that reflects back to why I have pets in my room. You know, that's one of the main reasons as well. They can experience life and death from a removed situation. Something that they care for but it's not critical to their survival. It's not a mom or a dad not a grandparent. **(Conversation; March 4, 1992, p. 10)**

As human beings, we all knew that life and death were very much connected to each other. They were so connected that when we experienced one, we forgot to realize the other. We needed to be aware that without life, there is no death and without death, there is no life. To understand life fully, one needs to understand death. However, when we experienced the death of the people we knew, it always brought us the feeling of sadness. In dealing with our grief, we began to reflect on our relationships with those people and our lives as a whole. It seemed to me that death always reminded us to look into ourselves and reflect on our lives.

It was the same with Carol. The unexpected death of the boy she worked with in the afternoon made her feel very sad and totally shocked. Carol reflected back on her relationship with the boy, her philosophy and her teaching.

> I did reflect back and think, "Was there something else that I could have done?" And I thought for the time that I knew him, I gave him my attention. I gave him my love and my caring. I can like every child that I come in contact with. I can find something about them that a gift---that is special about them and I really cared for this boy. And I knew that I gave him my full attention. He knew I cared for him and that we could talk about something whatever he wanted to talk about. So, I thought, "Well, I did for him what I could do best." And so I don't feel any guilt about that at all. No, not me---No. **(Conversation; March 4, 1992, p. 8)**

Death always reminded me of the uncertainties of my life. Through reflecting on life and death, Carol was aware that teaching was the same as life. It was like the unknown and the uncertainties. Teachers needed to deal with it. Carol viewed that teachers should be flexible and sensitive for what was going on in the classroom because sometimes teaching didn't go the way that we expected.

> You can have preparedness like expecting it probably would go this way and plan for generalities but it never can go exactly as you plan it. It's just these children in this community that affect a new priority. Everyday there's a new priority and you have to go with what's right. You have to go to instinct and your intuition. This is the most important thing right now. **(Conversation; March 4, 1992, p. 9)**

I believed that the end of one's life could be the beginning of a new life. In all of our lives, we experienced "death" and "life" all the time. We lived through a lot of stories. When one story ended, a new story or a "new life" began. Our story of life and death went on in a circle as we lived through the stream of "being." As Carol reflected on one boy's death, it reminded her of the "new life" of her students. During the sleep-over, Carol learned a lot about the background of each of her students. She saw the progress of the children and realized that her students were going through a new stage of their development.

> You know, when the kids came for the sleep-over, one of the things that I was thinking about is that they had to leave behind the part of their infancy to choose to come and stay

> over. They had to select a more mature self. "O.K. I'm going into a new stage now. I'm going to be able to be fine on my own" because the parents won't come in so they had to make that decision and it's like---when they were coming through the door. It's almost like a rite of passage (laugh). **(Conversation; March 4, 1992, p. 11)**

When reflecting upon her experiences at the sleep-over with the children, Carol was aware of the other part of her life, the happy part. She realized the relationship among her students and the relationship between the children and her.

> Well, the kids---um---you know, that after the sleep over are very warm to us now and warm to each other. You can see the friendship stronger. The bond between them are much stronger and the hugs. They looked like Shawn that night, he was lying in bed and I was rocking one of the kids to sleep. They were having a hard time sleeping. He was laying in the sleeping bag and he looked up at me and he just smiled at me and I had---my hands around the other person. I raised one of my fingers and waived to him and he had his hands here and he waved the same little finger back to me and smiled and smiled (laugh). I've seen him looking at me with that same smile I remembered, smiling here in the night when he was there. **(Conversation; March 4, 1992, p. 14-15)**

By reflecting upon her story with the children, Carol could see the reality of life. In the nature of life, no one can be happy forever or suffering for all their lives. Life is the mixture between the two, happiness and suffering. If we have never experienced the suffering of life, how can we know what happiness is. Carol saw life as a long continuum which had both good and bad components. She articulated herself well and in the following way:

> But I always imagined there is a fulcrum And life is a kind of a long continuum. So from the fulcrum you can have a life set here, you know. When you live life close to the fulcrum, balancing each other good and bad it's still just shallow and narrow. If you have more experiences that are both good and bad the fulcrum or the distance---the dimension of your life is much richer and broader but there's still a balance. As you have more experiences both bad and good, your life has a much broader dimension, yah. And I would rather have a life that creates the wisdom and feel the wisdom and understanding, than to go through

as a narrow tunnel. So if you experience pain, it's O.K. because you know that it's going to hurt now but it will be great because it will make me a stronger and wiser person. **(Conversation; March 4, 1992, p. 16)**

Chapter V

Michael's Story

> We must embrace struggle. Every living thing conforms to it. Everything in nature grows and struggles in its own way, establishing its own identity, insisting on it at all cost, against all resistance. (Rilke, 1992, p. 63)

I remember as a little girl that I had not seen male teachers in my school. All my teachers were women. Because I was aware that my school was a school for girls, I was not surprised by this. When my younger brother finished kindergarten in my school, he had to move to a school for boys. I then began to be aware of another world of teaching, the world of being a male teacher. I saw both male and female teachers at my brother's school.

I would not have thought back on this situation if I had not specialized in Early Childhood Education during my university years. In my first year of Early Childhood Education in university, there were six male student teachers and twenty-four female student teachers. As the years went on, there were only four male student teachers left in Early Childhood. The other two dropped out and went to other faculties. When we graduated, only one of them became a kindergarten teacher. The other three changed their professional directions. Two of them went on to graduate schools in other faculties. One was in a profession that did not have anything to do with teaching.

As I reflected back on my experiences, I began to realize we needed more male teachers in Early Childhood teaching. I felt we had more and more children from divorced families or from single parent homes. Both the boys and girls who stayed with their mothers needed male teachers as role models. My friend, a male kindergarten teacher, became popular among his kindergarten class. The children loved to come to see him and to be with him. At the same time I was consciously aware of the image our society had for males, an image which made it difficult for them to be elementary school teachers. Therefore, I was glad to have Michael participate in my study because I had been thinking for a long time about what led a man to become a kindergarten teacher and what it was like for him to be a male kindergarten teacher.

Getting to Know Michael

It was in summer 1991 that I first met Michael in an Early Childhood class. The class included a practicum as well as theory. It was a required course for Early Childhood students. Since it was offered during the summer, we had only six weeks to finish the class. Michael was co-teaching the class with Kate. He taught in the school where we observed and did some teaching. When Kate introduced us to Michael, I was surprised because he was a male kindergarten teacher. After introducing himself, Michael talked about his philosophy of education which made me even more interested in him. I was working on my research proposal during that time. In my journal entry on that day, I wrote,

> The most interesting activity for me today was when Michael talked about himself as a teacher. It was interesting because he began his conversation by talking about his philosophy. He said that his philosophy changed over the year which made me think hard about it. I felt that I would like to talk with him more about his philosophy and his past experiences. Also I was looking forward to observing his teaching. One of the questions that I had in my mind was, What did he mean when he said, "My philosophy changed over the year." I wanted to listen to him more about this. It might clarify my ideas about looking at a teacher's philosophy. Another thing that I found today was Michael mentioned a lot about the word "philosophy." I would like to know his ideas about articulating philosophy. Is it important for teachers to articulate their philosophy of education? It seemed that I was interested in observing the teacher more than young children in the classroom which I thought was not the objective of this class. Maybe I needed to have a discussion with Kate about this point. "Is it O.K for me to observe Michael and the children?" **(Journal; July 4, 1991)**

Kate allowed me to work on what I wanted to do. Both she and Michael also gave me an opportunity to work on a project with them. As a student, I observed both of them and wrote in my journal about what I learned from attending their class. The three of us shared our journals together. We responded in each other's journals. We then met to talk about our journals and to reflect on them. In one of his journal entries, Michael clarified my ideas about "changing philosophy." He talked about the circumstances of our work situation such as constraints, demands, personal and physical limitations that forced us to "accommodate" our belief system. He also mentioned "theory" and "practice." To him, it was nice to have the theory but reality might be something different. It made teachers encounter the difficulty of living with the discontinuity of belief versus practice. Therefore, teachers needed to "accommodate" their belief system to go with their practice of teaching. He reflected,

> What I think happens much more often is that we end up having to make accommodations to our belief system. The circumstances of our work situation, constraints, demands, personal and physical limitations force us to change our outside behaviors, but our belief system is not in fact being changed. We are simply accommodating. If this goes on for too long, we may in fact change our belief system, making statements like "It's all very nice to have that theory, but in reality..." or "The world is really a nasty place, and you can't trust people. I've learned that." In these situations, it's simply a matter that our brain has difficulty living with the discontinuity of belief vs. practice. "I believe we shouldn't swear." As we come across situations where we do, in fact, swear, we change that belief to "I believe there are some circumstances when it is okay to swear." Otherwise we have to live with the discontinuity (hypocrisy) of our own practice. So we accommodate. **(Notes on Nophanet's Journal)**

After I read his journal entry that day, I was very interested in what he was telling me. I wanted to know how he "accommodated" his belief to go together with the reality of the school. In other words, I wanted to know how he lived with his dilemmas in teaching. However, I did not mention anything about my research to him because I did not feel that I knew him well enough. As a neophyte to research, I wanted to work with teachers with whom I was familiar rather than with strangers.

As we worked together and shared our journals, we became good friends. I felt I knew him more. To me, he seemed very open and energetic about teaching and learning. I shared my research interest. Michael was interested in "reflective teaching." We shared our readings and talked about how important it was for teachers to reflect on their teaching. Michael talked from time to time about his "real" classroom, the classroom where he worked from September to June. During that time I wondered what his "real" classroom looked like and what his role was in the classroom. I was also curious about how he lived with his teaching dilemmas. At the same time, I was looking for another teacher to work with on my research. I decided to invite Michael to be a part of my research. When he agreed to be part of the study, I was very glad and looked forward to working with him in the classroom.

My Research Journey Begins: Who am I in the Classroom?

After I finished writing my proposal in the fall of 1991, I gave a copy of my proposal to Michael to read. On January 2, 1992, I phoned Michael to tell him I would come to his classroom every Wednesday and Friday. He told me school started at 8:45 and dismissed at 11:30.

I got up early on January 8, 1992 to visit Michael at his school. From what Michael told me, it seemed to me that Mesa Elementary School was an inner-city school. Compared to Carol's school, this school was not far from where I lived. I had to take two buses to get to the school. I got on a bus around 7:30 and walked about two blocks from the transit to the school. It was a cold day in winter. When I got off the bus, the sky was still dark. As I walked to the school, I saw snow everywhere. There were two or three children walking to their schools. As a person who used to live in the big, crowded city of Bangkok, I felt I was alone among the vastness of snow.

On the street corner, I saw a white large building and a huge snowy playground with a bit of playground equipment. I told myself this should be Mesa Elementary School. As I walked closer to the front door of the school, I saw a careful sign written "Mesa School." Mesa Elementary school was a two-storied building. It looked like most of the schools in Thailand. The school had a huge playground compared to most of the school playgrounds in Bangkok.

It was 8:05 when I got to the school. I went to the school office and heard the news from a radio but I did not see anybody there. I sat down on a big sofa and waited for somebody to come in. The office was clean and in front of me I saw a beautiful Japanese painting hanging on one of the walls. Later, on my last visit with Michael, his assistant told me the painting belonged to the principal and he would take it when he moved to another school. Around 8:10, I heard someone walk by the office. A lady came in and she seemed surprised to see me in the office early in the morning. I told her I wanted to observe Michael, a kindergarten teacher. She asked me if I was a student teacher. Her question made me stop and think for a few seconds. I realized I did not know how I should explain to her who I was. "Am I a researcher? Maybe I am. Am I a friend? Yah, I am." At that moment I wished I were a student teacher in her meaning. In a way, I was conscious that I was a learner because I wanted to learn more about teaching from being in Michael's classroom. I did not want to identify my role as a researcher because I had never considered myself to be a researcher before. My image of the researcher was totally different from what I thought my role should be in the classroom. Every time I heard the word "researcher," I saw a person who sat at the back of the classroom and took notes all the time. I felt that I was a friend who came to visit another friend's classroom and wanted to learn more about teaching and learning in his/her classroom. Sometimes I thought the word "researcher" made me distant from the teachers. I decided to tell her I was Michael's friend who wanted to come to visit Michael's classroom for about six months. She told me Michael's classroom was upstairs. I was surprised because in my school we always kept the younger children downstairs and the older children upstairs. We thought that younger children would fall down the stairs more easily than the older ones.

Around 8:15, a lot of teachers came in. When Michael came in, he introduced me to his principal. After that we went upstairs to his classroom.

The First Day in Michael's Classroom

When I walked into Michael's classroom, the first thing I noticed was a parents' corner. Michael set up the parents' corner at the entrance to the classroom. Michael put out a lot of storybooks and parent's guide books for the parents. The classroom was very bright because all the walls were painted white. It seemed to be small when I thought about all the activities Michael had in his classroom. There was a "real" stove, a sink and a refrigerator in his classroom. Michael told me he and the children cooked every Tuesday and Thursday. On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, the children brought their own snacks to school.

At the book area, I saw a poster,

Listening

Eyes looking
Ears listening
Mouth quiet
Hands together
Body still

I saw two boys from grade 5 and 6 come to help Michael set up the classroom. Later, I found out that the boys came on their own to help Michael every day. It was not part of their assignments. I asked Michael about the number of children in his class. He told me he had twenty-one students last semester but there would be twenty-two this semester because he had a new boy coming in. However, he was not certain of that because he had a feeling the boy's mother did not like the program he provided for the children. The boy came from a structured classroom. When his mother had come in for the first time, she asked Michael, "What are they (the children) doing?" Michael let her walk around the classroom. He tried to show her that the children were doing a lot of different things. However, the mother ended up by saying, "They all do their own thing."

When Laura, an assistant teacher, came in, Michael introduced me to her. After that he went on to fix a light bulb in the listening area and to prepare the activities of the day.

At 8:50, I heard the bell ring. When I looked through the window on the other side of the classroom, I saw the children stop playing and come into the building. Michael told me we had to go downstairs to meet the children. When we arrived downstairs, the children were in line already. Michael and I walked with them to the classroom.

Circle activity

When the children reached the classroom, they went to their name board and turned their name cards to the other side. They then sat down at a book area. Michael asked his students, "Who wants to do the morning song today?" Most of the children raised their hands. Michael called on a little boy to lead the morning song. The boy sat on a step-stool in front of other children and raised one of his hands. Other children also raised their hands. I found out on the second day that the children needed to raise their hands to show they were ready to study. Michael registered the children by counting the number of the children in the classroom. After that they sang a "Good morning" song. Then Michael asked Justin and John to take the attendance down to the central office. He began the lesson by reading poems with his students. There were two poems that the children had to read for the day. One was "Good Morning." The other one was "Healthy Kids." While reading the poems with the children, Michael pointed at the printed words. He discussed the poems with the children by asking them a lot of questions. For example,

Michael What is this? (pointed at "W")
Children: W
Michael: What is this? (pointed at "E")
Children: E
Michael: What does it say?
Children: .... (quiet)
Michael: It says "We."
Children: We...........We

After that he helped his students count the number of times the word "We" was in the poem "Healthy Kids." Michael helped the children count the number of times the word "need" was in the poem. He asked the children to choose their poem for the week from between the poem "Healthy Kids" and "Good Morning." Four students raised their hands for "Healthy Kids" and twelve students raised their hands for "Good Morning." Michael asked the children which poem interested more of them. The children said, "Good Morning."

Good Morning

I brush my teeth,
I comb my hair,
I wash my hands and face.
I clip my nails,
I blow my nose,
And out the door I race.

By Michael

After that Michael called on one of the boys to read his story to the class. Michael helped him read the printed words in the story and let the boy talk about his drawings. While reading the child's story, Michael showed the children the difference between numbers and letters. When one of the children talked to his friends during story time, Michael told the boy, "Kevin, look at me. I know you're excited with your story but who's sharing now?" After that he called on a girl to share her story. After the girl finished her story, a little boy came to share his. The boy tried to read some words from the first page of his story but when he turned to the next page, he could not read the words. The boy said, "I don't know how to read these." Laura, the assistant teacher, helped him read. After story time, Michael let the children play in the centers.

Falling into Education

There were some quiet moments in my life which I wonder about, when I looked back on my experiences as a little girl. As I recall, people around me often said I looked like my dad. When I first went to kindergarten, my kindergarten teacher told me I should be a doctor when I grew up. During that time I never questioned why I should be a doctor. I was just aware that everybody around me expected me to be a doctor like my parents. It seemed as if I accepted what everyone told me and I was willing to be a doctor.

When I was in junior high school, I began to see another side of myself, a side I had not recognized before. I began to be aware that I loved language. I loved learning language and I was very good at it. During that time, there was a voice in myself that told me I should go into arts, not science. At the same time, there were a lot of voices outside of myself that told me I was good at science too and I should go into science, not arts. I was also aware that both my teachers and parents wanted me to be in science so that I could become a doctor. I listened to the outer voice and went into science in high school. As I began my high school, I had to study very hard. During that time I was tense. I did not want to be a doctor anymore. I started to listen to my inner voice and began to blame my dad because I knew he really wanted me to be a doctor. At the same time I was wondering why I had to be like my parents. Why did I have to be like others? Could I be myself?

When Michael told me about his experiences in elementary school, I understood how he felt. As a little boy, Michael felt that he did not do well in school because he did not have a lot of opportunities to be himself, to do things that he wanted to do. He did not understand why everybody had to do the same things at the same time.

> I wasn't doing well in school, not because I couldn't do well in school, but because I wasn't very---um---I felt like I was just going through the motions. Everybody was doing the same things at the same time. I didn't feel like I had a lot of chance to be myself. **(Conversation; October 13, 1992, p. 4)**

However, there were some teachers that allowed him to explore things he was interested in. Michael spent most of his time on reading because he felt he gained a lot from reading on his own.

> Some teachers gave me opportunities to do that, to explore things I was interested in, take myself further. I used to read a lot. That way I could get a lot of things out of it, out of reading. I could expand my horizons. **(Conversation; October 13, 1992, p. 4)**

Michael was very happy when he was in grade four because his teachers allowed him to study grade five language arts and social studies.

> But when I was in grade four, they (the teachers) allowed some students to go ahead and do grade five social studies and language arts---, and we went with the grade five class. It was---I don't know---they just selected three or four of us that were part of the project they had, so we did it. I did very well and I enjoyed it. **(Conversation; October 13, 1992, p. 4)**

However, when Michael was in grade five, the teachers decided to quit their project. Michael and some of his friends had to be full-time students in grade five and study the same things they had studied before but with a different teacher.

> The next year when I was in grade five, they decided that they weren't going to do this again and we would just continue and stay full-time in grade five. And what that meant was I was doing the same curriculum at the same school and they had the same resources, same books that we were working out of, but with a different teacher. **(Conversation; October 13, 1992, p. 4)**

Michael was very frustrated because he had to study the same things again. Also, he felt the teacher did not try to make things interesting. He decided to stop working on his assignments and at the end of the year, he failed.

> The teacher wasn't as dynamic, didn't make it interesting and so all of a sudden I felt like I was having to re-do something that I had already proven that I could do and that was frustrating and so I just pulled away from it and stopped working. And by the end of grade five, I was failing because I wasn't doing assignments and didn't get anything done...**(Conversation; October 13, 1992, p. 4)**

After that Michael moved to a private school. He got a scholarship because his parents could not afford to pay the tuition fee. Michael spent four years in that school doing grade six, seven, eight, and nine.

> So my parents heard about---I don't know how they heard about it but they heard about a private school and they sent me to the private school. And it took me....it was a lot of hard work to catch up because the other students were ahead of me academically. And it took me a good year to get on a level with them. I went there for grade six, seven, eight, and nine. Because my parents couldn't afford to pay, somebody at the school sponsored me, gave me a scholarship so that I didn't have to pay. **(Conversation; October 13, 1992, p. 5)**

During his study in the private school, Michael was happy. He had a smaller class and he felt teachers in the school were very committed to their work even though they were not well paid. He felt they cared about their children and challenged them. To Michael, it made a difference in his life. He felt he might not have attended university if he had not had a chance to go to the school.

> In that school, education---because we had smaller classes, we had---teachers who were very committed to the work they were doing. They weren't well paid. They were doing it because they liked the work and they thought it was important. That made a difference for me because they were people obviously showing that they cared about me and they were challenging me and that---um---that made a difference in my life. I probably would never have gone here to the university if I hadn't have a chance to go to that school. **(Conversation; October 13, 1992, p. 5)**

As a little girl, I never pictured myself as a teacher. It might be because my house was in the same area as a hospital. I was surrounded by people who worked in the hospital. Most of my friends were the children of the doctors in that hospital. I recall, I loved playing "doctor." I never played "teacher." I had no idea what it was like to be a teacher. Whenever my teachers or cousins asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?," the only answer I gave them was, "I want to be a doctor." As I grew up, there were many times I imagined myself as something else, not a doctor. I never imagined myself as a teacher. I had an image of myself as a "judge," a "writer," a "politician," or a "university professor" but not a "kindergarten teacher." Teaching was not a profession that was highly ranked in my society.

Therefore, I was not surprised when Michael told me he did not want to be a teacher when he finished high school. I used to feel the same way as him. He articulated,

> When I graduated from high school, I didn't want to be a teacher. I thought that would be a really bad job. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 6)**

After finishing high school, Michael worked as a volunteer with Boy Scouts and as a drama teacher at a school care program for five years. It took him a while before he decided he wanted to be a teacher.

> I think it took me a little bit of time before I decided I wanted to be a teacher. It's a little different kind of commitment. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 8)**

While working in the school care program, Michael met three people who encouraged him to go to university. One of them was a grade one teacher with whom he was co-teaching. Michael felt this teacher was very committed to her children and he learned a lot about teaching from her.

> There were two---three people actually who encouraged me to go to university. One of them was the grade one teacher who I was working with at Fullan school. Her name is Marni Combs and she was very committed to her children so I learned a lot about teaching when I first started because I would teach the class. She would take a small group of children out and I would teach the class or---um---I would end up---um---taking a small group out. She would teach but I learned from her about teaching. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 8)**

Another person who influenced Michael during that time was a school consultant. Michael felt that he learned some techniques for working with special-needs children.

> Pam was a consultant at that time. And from her I learned some techniques about working with special needs children and I also saw her teach a few lessons to the class as a group. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 8)**

There was also a principal who encouraged Michael to continue his studies. "And---then the principal in Fullan encouraged me as well." **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 8)**

Michael had a lot of good experiences in working with young children at the school care program. He felt he had success with them.

> And---then I was working---I was working in and out of school care program---working with young children. So, I had some expe---some success with them. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 6)**

From teaching drama classes with children, Michael developed an area of interest in drama. He wanted to be a drama teacher. To be a drama teacher, Michael realized he needed to have a teaching degree.

> I was also teaching drama classes with children. And I was interested in becoming a drama instructor with a drama school. And I realized that to do that I should have a teaching degree. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 6)**

Michael also realized that if he became a teacher, he could get a job any place in the world.

> And initially I wanted to go into teaching because I thought it would be a job where I could work just about anywhere I wanted to in the world. If I wanted to move somewhere, I could get a job in teaching. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 6)**

Michael started thinking about going to the university. However, when he started exploring his options at the university, he realized that if he wanted to have an impact in working with children, he should work with the younger children rather than with the older ones. He decided to go through Elementary Education.

> Once I started going and exploring my options at university, I realized that I thought if I was going to have an impact on working with children, I would do that at the younger rather than the older age. I wanted to go down to elementary. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 7)**

In the Department of Elementary Education, Michael heard about two specialized areas. One was Special Education, the other was Early Childhood Education. Michael was interested in Special Education because he used to work with special needs children. However, he found that Special Education students did not have their own group. They had to go from one class to another class and did not become close with each other. In Early Childhood Education, they accepted only a small number of students so student teachers learned and worked together as a group. Michael felt he needed a support group. He wanted to learn and work with other people rather than learning on his own all the time. He decided to go into Early Childhood.

> And within that (Elementary Education) I heard about two specializations. One was Special Education and I worked

> with children that were special needs so I was interested in Special Education. When you went through that for training you took---you didn't---have a group of people that you knew. You just went through class after class. And in Early Childhood you had to apply to get in and they only accepted thirty people and you were in a group. So, I thought that's what I want to do because I want to work with a group of people and learn from them over a few years rather than learning on my own all the time. So, that's why I picked Early Childhood. **(Conversation; March 2, 1991, p. 7)**

I still remember when I graduated from university and went into teaching. It was like a dream. I felt as if I knew nothing about teaching. As I went to my school for the first time, I tried to think about what I learned from the university that prepared me for teaching. I could not think of anything that would help me with teaching except my practicum. During my university years, I had to memorize a lot of information in order to pass the exams. The information helped me get a job but it did not help me feel ready to teach. On my first day of teaching, I felt like I did not know how to teach.

It was the same with Michael. During his university years, he felt he gained a lot of information from the classes he went through. However, he felt that all those classes did not help him to make decisions for his teaching.

> The classes when I went to them, I just learned about curriculum, and ways of delivering curriculum. I felt empty when I left. I didn't---feel like---I felt like I gained a lot of information but they really didn't help me---I didn't know how to make decisions. **(Conversation; October 13, 1992, p. 1)**

However, Michael found there were some classes in Early Childhood that he took during his very first year that helped him a lot in his teaching. During those classes, Michael was asked to write his philosophy of education, that is, what he believed about children. At that time, Michael felt it was hard for him to identify his philosophy because he did not have clear ideas about his philosophy. With his classmates, Michael had to keep journals and participate in discussions about teaching and learning. Through the discussions and writing, he began to realize more about his philosophy of education. He was able to express his philosophy more clearly than before. To Michael, it was very important for him to be consciously aware of his philosophy of education because it helped him to make decisions on his own about the curriculum, about what he believed about teaching, learning, and children.

> The classes that made a difference for me were some of the Early Childhood classes where we had to write a philosophy. The very first year we had to write---what's your philosophy of education or working with children and it was really sketchy for you at first. I didn't have very clear ideas about what my philosophy was. But we did journals and we did a lot of work in groups. And we talked a lot and wrote a lot and just explored with those concepts---um---and I found over time that my philosophy took a stronger sort of form. I was able to express it a lot more clearly. And that was most significant for me because then all of a sudden I wasn't tied down by having to do what somebody had written in the curriculum that I was supposed to do. All of a sudden, I had the power to make decisions for myself because I knew what was important to me. And I knew what I believed about children and about teaching and about active teaching and learning. **(Conversation; October 13, 1992, p. 1)**

During his fourth year at the university, Michael got an award in Early Childhood Education. This award was not given to a person who had high academic standing but for the one who cared about children and about teaching.

> This award wasn't supposed to be for the person who got the high academic standing but for somebody who cared about children and about their job and who had energy and enthusiasm and interest in the field and tried to keep on top of current research and so a kind of a person who would try new things, that sort of thing. **(Conversation; October 13, 1992, p. 3)**

After graduating from the university, Michael applied for a teaching position with a local school board. The principal at Mesa School phoned him to offer him a job. The principal was an elementary person who was aware there were not many men in elementary schools. He wanted a male teacher to teach in kindergarten.

> The principal phoned me up and he just said he wanted to offer me a job. And then---he asked me if I could come down and see the school so I knew what I was getting into. So, I went and saw the school and he was---I guess he decided he wanted me, because he wanted to have a man teaching kindergarten. **(Conversation; October 13, 1992, p. 2)**

Coming to Understand Michael's Dilemmas

Dilemma #1 Life on a "Choosing Board"

As a teacher, Michael believed that children should take ownership in their learning. They should be independent in their learning. He articulated,

> The most important thing for me is that the children take ownership for their learning, that the children become independent in their learning. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 8)**

At the beginning of the year, Michael developed the educational goals for his students and submitted them to the principal. He wrote,

> Development of Independence and Self Confidence:
>
> The children in the class will begin to view themselves as capable and competent learners. This will include social interactions, problem solving and academic areas (ie. child sees self as a reader, as a writer...). This will be accomplished through involving children in classroom routines and responsibilities. They will be encouraged to make positive choices, be responsible for themselves and their environment, and engage positively in social interactions and negotiations. **(General Educational Goals-Mesa Kindergarten-1991/92)**

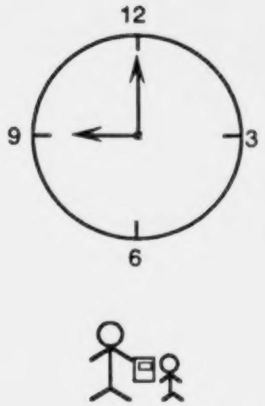
In his teaching, Michael always encouraged the children to get involved in most of the decisions he made for them. At one time Michael was frustrated about recess because he felt that it disrupted the children's activities during the center time. In his opinion, the children had less time to read during the center time because it took them ten minutes to dress up and ten minutes to clean up during winter before they went out for recess.

Michael thought about the alternative. He told me on the way to school that the children might have their own recess after the other children's recess so they would have more time in the centers to read poems and chant. He also said, "I might talk to Laura to see what she thinks about it" **(Conversation; January 29, 1992)**.

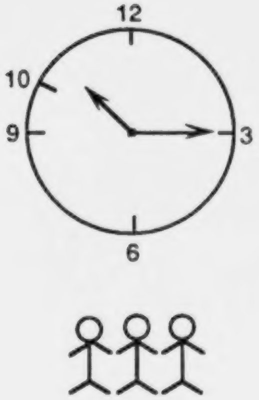
During the circle activity that day, Michael asked the children to gather in the book area. He asked them, "Can I have your attention to make a decision, please?" He told the children about the two situations and that he needed them to make a choice. One of the situations was that the children could have recess at the same time as other children. Another one was that they could have recess after the other children so they would have extra time for centers. At first the children didn't understand what their teacher was trying to explain to them. They could not make the decision. Michael solved this problem by drawing two pictures to explain to them.

(See page 116 for pictures)

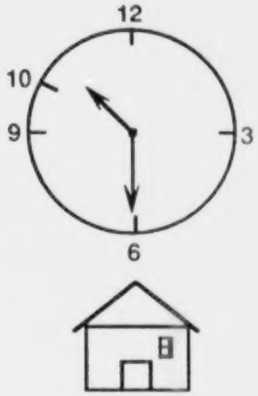
①



Reading buddy

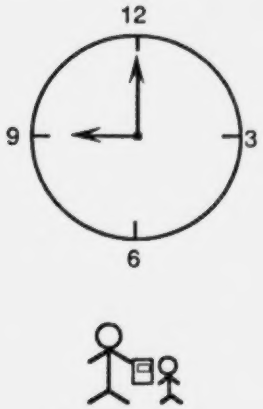


Recess time

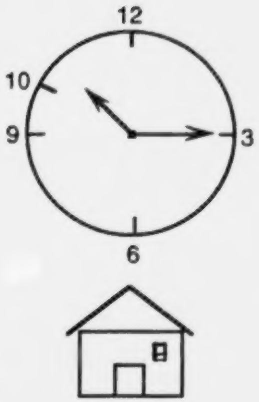


Center time

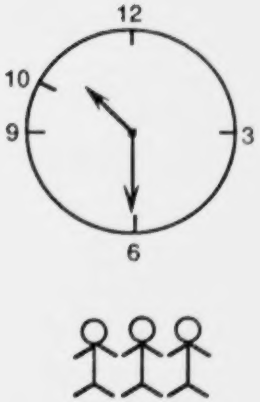
②



Reading buddy



Center time



Recess time

After that he asked them one by one to make a decision. After he asked every student, he told them the result of their choices. He said sixteen children wanted to have extra time at the centers. Two children wanted to have less time at the centers and to go outside at the same time as the other children. The children would have extra time at the centers and would go outside after that **(Fieldnotes, January 29, 1992)**.

In the reality of schools, most of the time decisions were made for the children. I remember when I was a little girl, I did not have much opportunity to make my own choices. My teachers made decisions for me and my friends. We needed to listen carefully to their instructions and to follow them. This attitude also reflected my culture. From my own experiences, I felt that listening was considered to be more important than speaking in Thai culture. Children were always encouraged to listen carefully to adults and to follow their directions.

As a teacher, Michael realized the reality of schools. He tried to manage this dilemma by making a balance between giving his students opportunities to make their own decisions and helping them to learn how to follow instructions.

From my observations, when some of the children did not listen and follow his instructions well enough, Michael asked them to practice listening to the instructions. In one of my fieldnotes, I recorded,

> Today Michael asked the children to practice fire drill three times. On the first time, some of the children were very slow when Michael told them there was a fire alarm. Therefore, he asked them to practice for a second time. On the second time, the children did not listen and follow their teacher's instruction well. Some of them were playing with each other and did not want to go out of the building. Therefore, Michael let the children who followed his instruction go to the gym with Laura. After that he took the rest of the children who did not follow the instruction to the classroom. After the gym time, Michael asked the children to practice fire alarm for the third time. **(Fieldnotes; February 21, 1992)**

By reflecting on the reality of the schools and his own experiences as a student and a teacher, Michael was aware of the dilemmas he was facing in his practice.

> I prefer---um---to give them as much opportunities to make decisions for themselves but I know that in school they're going to have decisions made for them along the way too. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 9)**

At the same time, he became aware of how important it was for the children to learn to make decisions on their own. He expressed himself in the following way.

> But I really try to teach them how to solve problems on their own, how to make decisions on their own, and give them the opportunities to develop because I think that if our children are going to be successful in our society, they're going to be successful because they're thinking and making decisions---from a very young age. And if we continue with a school system that makes decisions for children all the time, they're never going to learn how to make good decisions. When they graduate from schools, they're going to make bad decisions. As they go through the school system, they're going to make bad decisions because they're going---how long they learn how to listen and follow directions from people who they admire or who are supposed to be leading them. But suddenly it's going to be their peers handing them cigarettes and saying, "Here smoke this." And if they don't know how to make decisions or if they don't know how to be independent and do things on their own, they're going to get led off by those other kids who are leaders. They're going to continue to be followers. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 9)**

Michael realized about the two worlds of making decisions. One was learning how to make "good" decisions. Another was learning how to live with "bad" decisions. Therefore, in his teaching, Michael tried to find ways to encourage his students to make decisions on their own and to see the results of them. He provided a choosing board for his students.

> So, independence and thinking---these are things that I work toward. That's my main focus and I guess it's my main focus because I think in school children have lots of opportunities to learn how to follow instructions. I still work on that, but I think they have lots of opportunities to

> do that in school so I think it's more important to learn how to make decisions. And that's why I use the choosing board. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 10)**

A choosing board was a big piece of paper on which Michael charted the activities in the classroom. The children put their name cards on the board as they moved to different areas in the classroom (**Fieldnotes; March 2, 1992**).

(See page 120 for a choosing board)

CHOOSING BOARD

WOOD	1	2	3	4
WRITING	1	2	3	4
ART	1	2	3	4
FOLDERS	1	2	3	4
DRAMA	1	2	3	4
COOKING	1	2	3	4
LISTENING	1	2	3	4
1 2 3 4 MATH	1	2	3	4
SCIENCE	1	2	3	4

The purpose of the choosing board in Michael's classroom was different from other kindergarten classrooms. It was not used to track what his students had done during the day. He used it because he wanted the children to be aware of what they were doing and the decisions they made as they moved their name cards along with them to different activities in the classroom.

> I want them (the children) to keep moving the cards as they move to different places in the classroom, so that they will **see** when they move to another area in the classroom. Then they will **say**, "Oh! I'm making decision." Then, they have to come here and figure out where they went and move their cards there. That way they will **see** their decisions when they're making them, not just in their heads. They're making their decisions there and they're connecting action to symbol. That's why I called it choosing board or center board. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 10)**

Michael did not agree with teachers who used the choosing board to keep track of their children's activities and to control where they were. To him, it was a waste of time because by doing that the children did not have time to play by themselves in the centers. Michael thought that the teachers should look at the story behind the children's action.

> I have seen some classrooms doing it (choosing board). But when they do it, they want the kids everyday to track what they've done. I don't think that's necessary at this younger age. I think you waste a lot of young children's time by forcing them to glue those things in books everyday. They don't have any time for centers. But some teachers use it because they want to control where the children go all day. They want to say, "Um, I want...." If they go up to a kid like Don and say, "Gee! I haven't seen you at the math center for a while. It's time you were over there." And they use that for tracking where they were rather than saying, "Why didn't Don go into that area? Maybe there is something that isn't interesting there. Maybe he just doesn't know how to use it or maybe he can do math at where he is right now." So, I prefer to bring subjects to them. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 11)**

Michael only kept track of new areas that he opened for the children. He wanted every child to have an opportunity to explore the new area. When he built in a wood-working area in the classroom, there were a lot of children interested in the area. Michael had to stay in the area to supervise the children because it was very dangerous to let the children play by themselves the first time. He limited the number of the children who could play in the area to three (**Fieldnotes; February 19, 1992**). He said,

> But for the other centers unless it's a specific like---wood-working right now. I'm keeping track of that because I want everybody to have a chance to go there and I can only have safely three children there everyday because of space and with all those tools. So, I allow three children to go there everyday until they've finished their projects and then the next one comes. And I guess the rest of them I don't have a problem with where they are at. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 11-12)**

Even though Michael did not agree with keeping track of the activities the children had done, he sometimes had a specific project that he wanted to keep a record of for all the children. Michael managed this situation by reflecting back on his philosophy. He let his students get involved in his decision making by asking them to agree with it before he let them do it.

> I might have---sometimes I have a specific project that I want them to do it and I say, " I want you to do it by Friday" like tracing their bodies. That sort of thing. You know, I get them to agree to do it before that day of the week. And so, I keep the record for those purposes but the rest of the time the---I know they're learning language skills. They're learning math skills all over in different spaces. They are having a lot of opportunities. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 12)**

Dilemma # 2 The Experience of Time in the Reality of Teaching

> In Michael's classroom, there were a lot of interesting things going on in the lives of the children. Every time I was in his classroom, I knew that the children taught me a lot of things about life. They told me story after story about their lives. I could see life from a perspective that I had never thought about before. The children created their

> own stories and lived the stories in the way that adults could not do and understand.
>
> On my early visits to Michael's classroom, a little girl, Christie, always asked me to write a letter for her saying, "Christie cannot go outside." Before writing a letter for her, I asked her, "How come you don't want to go outside during recess?" The girl answered, "I don't want my dress to be dirty." During that time, I told myself that she was a neat girl and then wrote a letter for her. She took the letter to Michael so that she could stay in the classroom during recess. When I talked to Michael, he said that Christie did not want to go outside because she was afraid that her mom was going to take her away from her daddy. I began to understand Christie better and see the world the way she saw it. **(Journal; March 9, 1992)**

There were many ways that we could tell a teacher's story. One of them was telling from the children's perspectives. I believed that children, as well as their teacher, brought with them their past and the personal experiences which affected both their lives and the teachers' lives in the classrooms. Michael, as an inner-city school teacher, experienced a lot of concerns about the personal lives of the children and how they were expressed in the classroom. More than half the children in his classroom stayed with either their fathers or mothers. These children were facing a lot of changes in their lives which created frustration for them. Some of them were suffering because of broken homes. As a classroom teacher and a school counselor, Michael felt these family problems affected the children's lives. Like adults, the children wanted to know why their parents were divorced. Some of them did not understand why their moms or dads left home. Michael stated,

> It affects them (the children) because they don't know why mom left or why dad left. Lucy doesn't know why her dad is in jail. I mean she knows that he stabbed her mom. And she knows that he---somebody said, "He had to go to jail." But she doesn't really understand why he is there. As far as she is concerned, he should be back. **(Conversation; January 29, 1992, p. 8)**

As a participant in the classroom for six months, I became a friend to the children. We had many conversations during free-play activities and recess. I felt we shared our personal and school lives. I found that our conversations became very interesting as I got to know the children better. There were a lot of moments in which I felt sympathy for them and could only be silent. I was aware that in that silence, there were a lot of things going on in our minds. We shared our feelings together.

In one of my conversations during recess with Kurt, a five-year-old boy, we talked about his family. Kurt was frustrated about his dad. He wondered why his dad left him and his sisters and he tried to make sense of it. In my fieldnotes, I recorded,

> During recess, there were two girls from other classes who came to help rearrange the children's work. I had a conversation with Kurt who was assigned to help clean up in the role-play area and didn't want to go for recess. At first we talked about his sisters who helped him dress up when he wanted to go outside. Then we talked about his mom and dad.
>
> Kurt: My dad broke and he ran away from home. He is a bad guy. He ran away from home.
>
> Nophanet: How come?
>
> Kurt: He doesn't like home. He smokes and smokes and fights with my mom.
>
> Then he asked me to read a storybook with him. He picked up a story and I read to him. When I forgot to read a sign in a picture, he said, "What does the sign say?" When we saw numbers on a page of the book, I asked him to read the numbers and count. He told me that he wanted to count all of them. **(Fieldnotes; January 15, 1992)**

Later, when I had a conversation with Michael about the children in the classroom, Michael mentioned that Kurt's dad was dead. He said, "His dad got shot in a parking lot downtown" **(Conversation; January 29, 1992)**. After that I did not talk to Kurt about his dad anymore. One day while I was reading a story to him, he said, "You know what, my dad ran away from home and he will never come back **forever**. He will never **ever** come back" **(Journal "Story about Kurt"; March 9, 1992)**. During that moment, I did not say anything. In my mind, there were a lot of things that I wanted to say to him but I could not. I was in silence for a while before I continued reading the story. I realized that Kurt was trying to find a way to create a "truth" for himself about his father, the truth that was less painful for him.

As a teacher, Michael was consciously aware of the frustrations with which some of his students were coping. When he taught the family theme to his students, Michael tried to make sure he talked about many different types of family structures. He expressed himself in the following way.

> When I talk about families, I make sure that we talked about it in different ways. I tell them when we're talking about special things that happen in school. I tell them, "You can bring along somebody special. You can bring along your mom or your dad or your uncle or somebody who lives with you." So, I was talking about a family being---people who are with you rather than just being a mom or a dad. **(Conversation; January 29, 1992, p. 9)**

In dealing with a child individually, Michael tried to help him/her be aware of the change that would come to his/her lives. He tried to alleviate the child's problem by talking about what the child might experience. He disclosed,

> Today it was---ah---Jeff. He was upset because his parents were getting separated. His mom was getting an apartment now. He is having a rough time. So when I talked to him---um---I said, "Well, that's not your fault that your parents did that. It's their decisions and you can't change that. It's not your fault. You will still be able to see your mom and your dad but it will be different. It's not going to be the same." But that's all I could think of. And I said, "I'm sorry it's happening to you." It's hard---it's really hard because there's nothing they (the children) can change. They have no control over that. **(Conversation; January 29, 1992, p. 9)**

When their parents separated, some of the children did not understand what was going on in their lives. They reacted to their parents' separation with bewilderment and fear. Some of them could not express their frustrations straightforwardly through oral language and they became more frustrated. After one boy's father separated from his mother, he developed an emotional problem. He got angry easily and had trouble dealing with his anger. He acted out and sometimes swore at his friends and teachers. One time the boy was very upset because he wanted to share his stories but he had not finished them yet. Because he was not finished, he had to work on his stories during the sharing time. After he finished the stories, he wanted to share them right away. However, at that time other children were sharing their stories. Michael asked the boy to sit down and wait for his turn but the boy was very angry. He cried and ran out of the classroom. Michael was very calm. He did not react. After the boy calmed down, Michael asked him to wait after class so that he could have a conversation with the boy (**Fieldnotes; February 12, 1992**). When I asked Michael to reflect on the situation, he stated,

> It doesn't help children who are feeling out of control. It doesn't help if you are looking out of control and sounding out of control. To them that just makes them believe the whole world is out of control. So, they need to hear somebody being calm about it and say, "No, you made a bad choice and you need to straighten things out." **(Conversation; February 14, 1992, p. 5)**

As a kindergarten teacher, Michael saw play as an opportunity to help his students develop confidence. He believed play could help the children overcome their negative feelings.

> There is a lot of confidence building going on when they're (the children) playing and when they can set goals for themselves and achieve them and share it with others. They say, "Look, I can do this!" And then they can overcome some of their negative feelings of self worth. **(Conversation; April 21, 1992, p. 8)**

In his teaching, Michael noticed that some of his students expressed their feelings while they were playing on their own. Some expressed their frustrations through stories.

> I see them (the children) using it---expressing it in their stories. Like one girl, little Lucy who came in, she wrote story after story after story about her dad who was in jail and she wanted him to come back and she missed him. And she had to really write a lot of stories about that---part

> of her was expressing how she was feeling about it. **(Conversation; April 21, 1992, p. 6)**

Some of the children expressed their frustration through their drawings. At one time when Michael kept Ben during recess because he had sworn at other children on the playground the day before, Ben drew a picture of what he wanted to do during the next recess. After the boy drew a picture of himself playing at recess, he drew a picture of himself and his dad on Halloween. Michael disclosed,

> And Ben I kept in today because the last recess he went out and he ended up swearing at a kid. I told him, "If you can't handle it out there on your own then you can stay inside for recess." So, he did. He drew a picture of himself playing at recess. So, he drew a picture of what he was going to do at recess and he drew a picture of his dad and him on Halloween because he misses his dad. He wanted to spend some time with him. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 13)**

On the morning of the same day, when Ben first came in, he had gone to a role play area and phoned his father. In my fieldnotes, I wrote,

> At 8:50, the children began to come in. I saw Ben come in first. He had his hair cut. When he came in, he went to the house area and phoned his dad. He said, "Nobody answers the phone." Therefore, I told him that maybe his dad was on his way to work. **(Fieldnotes; March 2, 1992)**

As a reflective teacher, Michael saw the importance of helping children reflect on what they were doing and feeling by giving feedback to them. He believed that teachers needed to help children identify their feelings and actions through language so that the children could recover themselves from frustration.

> And so as adults, we can help them by identify what it is that they are doing. So, rather than just letting them play it out, although that's helpful in itself, if we can help them identify in language or through what we say to them, "It looks---it sounds like---it looks like you are feeling unhappy about your dad or it looks like you are angry about something." And that will help children to---they get a reflection from an adult around them of what it is that they are doing. That's how they learn about themselves

> and about the world. They need an adult helping to give them feedback about what it is that they are saying and doing and feeling. They see that it's alright. **(Conversation; April 21, 1992, p. 7)**

By talking about what he believed, Michael realized that his philosophy reflected through his actions with the children in his classroom. In dealing with a little girl who did not feel good about what she saw happening to her father, Michael helped the girl retell the story the way she saw it by asking her questions. He helped her identify her feelings by asking her to talk about what she saw.

> Little Debby was telling me her story on Tuesday last week I think it was. She said---um---"My dad was in jail and then he came out of jail and then my mom went to jail." And---um---she was living with a friend then. And I asked her---oh! no, she told me. She said---um---"My dad---his blood was on me." And I said---um---"How did it get on you?" And she said, "Well, he was bleeding and he touched me so his blood got on me." And I said, "How did he start bleeding?" And she said, "He was cut." And I said, "What did he get cut with?" She said, "A knife." So, I asked her if it was an accident. She said, "No, my mom cut him with the knife." So, she saw that. She saw her mother stab her father. She saw her father bleeding and he came and touched her. So, she got blood on her and that's a really significant thing for her. And so she was sharing what happened. She wanted to know what my reaction was going to be. And I can---I can respond in a really negative way and get upset or I can say, "Well, it sounds like that made you feel that. How did you feel?" I ask how it made her feel. And then she can identify with that and say, "It's O.K." And I can say, "It's O.K. to feel that way." **(Conversation; April 21, 1992, p. 7)**

As a classroom teacher, Michael was aware of his "big" responsibility. He wanted to help his children recover from their frustrations about their personal experiences and he wanted to help them feel that they were powerful and competent in their learning and being.

> I feel like I have a big responsibility for helping children see themselves as powerful, as learning, as knowing, as being able to do as being competent. **(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 23)**

However, Michael was frustrated when he found out that he did not have enough time to interact with his students individually because there were too many children in the classroom.

> And I find it frustrating when I have such a large number of kids being able to get around to them in a day and if I just take a couple of minutes of each of them all the several thirty kids. If I spend just two minutes with each of them, that's fifty minutes. And that's only two minutes of time. So, I feel like it's a really big responsibility and I wish I could have more. **(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 23)**

At the same time he felt that a large number of the children in the classroom affected their learning during group time. When there were too many children in the classroom, the children could not concentrate well in a group.

> I think it affects it during group times, because the more children you have, the more restless children there are. The children are unable to focus in a group. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 14)**

However, Michael felt he could handle the children with the help of Laura, his assistant teacher and some parents who volunteered to help in the classroom.

> It's nice to have an assistant like Laura to work in here and have volunteers that come in because then I know that we can have more contact with the children. **(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 23)**

I believe we all have dilemmas in our lives and we try to figure out ways to get through all these dilemmas as we live our stories. Some of us might think that our dilemmas are "big" and very "important" and feel they can not handle the dilemmas. They can see only themselves, only their problems. These people might end up by feeling they are the most suffering people in the whole world. On the other hand, some of us are aware that our dilemmas are "important" but we know we can try to find ways to manage them. If we look at the world in a broader perspective, we see that there are a lot of people who suffer more than us. Our dilemmas are very "small" compared to their dilemmas. As I thought about people and their dilemmas, I felt that who we thought we were in the world had a lot to do with the way we handled our dilemmas. I learned there were two ways of looking at the world. One was the optimistic way of looking at life. The other one was the pessimistic way. Michael was an optimistic person. He always saw the world from a broader perspective than just looking only at himself. It helped him to handle his dilemmas quite well.

Even though Michael felt that there were too many children in his classroom, he was glad he did not have more than this number. He disclosed,

> Well, with an aid I can manage it. It's a---it's a big group but we make do. I'm glad I don't have thirty. I know some classes that have thirty. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 14)**

Dilemma #3 Finding Our Places in the Classroom

From spending time with the children for six months, I developed a close relationship with them. I found the children in the classroom moved a lot. They kept coming in and out all year long. There were a lot of days when I was surprised because I had not seen some children before. Laura, the assistant teacher, had to tell me they were new children who had just moved in. In the same way, there were some days that I felt down when Laura came and told me that some children had already moved out. I still remembered when Laura told me that Lucy moved. I felt upset and realized how much the girl meant to me and how important it was for her to spend time in Michael's classroom. In one of my journal entries, I wrote,

> When Laura told me this morning that Lucy moved to another school because her family moved, I was upset and couldn't say anything for a while. I was thinking about her, a little girl with black hair and black eyes. Her picture was still clear in my mind. Lucy was very quiet. She hardly talked to me at first. Maybe during that time I was a stranger to her and she needed time to get to know me

> more. As the time went on, she came and talked to me more. I still remember how she moved her body when she was playing in the gym. I knew I was worried about her future. I didn't know how she could deal with her life. I wanted her to finish her kindergarten here. At least she had Michael and Laura who really understood her. **(Journal; Story about Lucy)**

When I talked to Michael, he told me it was quite normal for the children to come and go because their families moved a lot.

> I lost a few and I gained a few too. In our community, so many people move. It's just what they do. They move a lot. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 13)**

However, when Michael went through the classroom routines with his students, he felt that the transience of the students' families affected his teaching and the routines in the classroom. The new students had to learn about the classroom routines. It affected his work as a classroom teacher because he had to prepare school work for them.

> I noticed that today when I went---when I was doing this poem chart here (points to chart) and they (the children) were fitting in with a lot of the routine, I went up there and I asked them, "Anybody who wants to come up and read the poem." And what they have to do is read it. And then I can find out where they are at as far as their reading abilities go and I can see their growth. Like Lorene, last time I checked her, she was able to pick out some words and so this time she could---like she could pick out like the first word in the pattern and one that repeated a lot and now I could ask her to pick out almost any words and she could find it. She could follow word to word. So, I see her growth there. But the new girls and the new boys, they don't come over and do it. I have to---I have to ask them to come over and show them what it is and how they can use it. So, there is Allie and Anne, and Dorothy. And it looks like Ron is gone so I don't have to worry about him but he would be in the same position. They haven't done this before and so now I have to teach them how to read it and then they will start using it on their own and being more independent at it. So, I notice it with that and also every time I get a new student in, we have to make up a new library card and a library pocket for their library books and---um---put their names on the class list and on the snack sheets and in the classroom register and on lists like the poem chart and then taking other ones off and I look at the number of them crossed off and then add it on. **(Conversation; April 21, 1992, p. 3-4)**

The moving of the children's families also changed the group of the children in the classroom. The children had to learn to adapt themselves to their new classmates.

> And that affects the others when they're coming and going. Like Don was away for a while and now he's back. Oh! and Sher was here at the start of the year and left and then she came back. And Margaret, she is new. And there's always new people that they don't know and it changes the group. They have to get to know this person and find out how they're going to be---Will that guy hurt me? Or is that girl going to be nice? Can I be a friend with her? **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 14)**

In his teaching, Michael was very upset when he looked at the document he got from the former kindergarten teacher of a new student. He felt the work the former teacher had given to the child did not help her to learn.

> It was really sad when I saw this. Here it is. She came from---I don't know what school she was at. Oh! my goodness, yah. This book and it is---what they mean by this was the number book and inside the teacher has made up a nice folder and inside there is a worksheet. It's got number five and then it's got tracing number five and then there's five little monkeys to color in and that's how the kids are supposed to learn about the number five. And then there is a six. And there are six mice. It's got two rows in there. So, she tried to trace those things. I don't know if that helped her learn what six is and what five is. Does that help her understand that six can be when you have eight and take away two, and six can also be when you take three and add another three to it. And then there is one here from Alberta agriculture. When they---I don't know what they were doing. **(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 17)**

Michael became even more upset when he read the teacher's comment about the little girl. The former teacher felt that the girl did not know anything.

> And since this teacher is saying, "She doesn't know anything." How can you say that a child who lives on the earth for five years doesn't know anything? So, she is giving her inappropriate stuff for her to be working with. **(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 17)**

There were many moments in my life when I thought back on my life and other people's lives around me and began to wonder about the way they handled their life's dilemmas. I still remember one of my friends when I was young. The girl was very smart. She always talked about things I had never thought about before. She always got the first place in every class in which we studied together. I was very proud of her and wanted be like her. After we graduated from junior high school, she passed an entrance exam and got into a "famous" high school. I did not have any contact with her because I knew she studied very hard to get into a medical school. After finishing high school, I heard she passed an entrance examination and got into a medical school in one of the famous universities in Thailand. I had not heard from her for a long time until we had a meeting among old friends. One of them mentioned the girl. She said the girl was not in medical school anymore because she broke down and could not continue her study. I was shocked. My image of her came back to my mind. As one of her friends, I knew she was smart and had a "good" mind. She could do a lot of things for other people and for herself. I did not understand why it had to be her. What about us?

When my brother got into medical school, he told my parents and me how hard his study was. He told stories about himself and his friends who were under a lot of tension before taking the exams. Some of them had to go to see a doctor in the middle of the night because they could not sleep. Sometimes my brother vomited before the exams because he studied too hard. As I listened to his stories, it reminded me a lot of my friend. I began to try to find a way to manage my dilemma in a way that made sense to me. The more I reflected on her story and my brother's stories, the more I was wondering about the goals of education. What was education for? Why did we put a lot of stress in education? How could people learn well under stress? Was the knowledge that we obtained from our education worth it? If the knowledge was valuable, it should have helped my friend manage her dilemma. In Thai culture, we had a proverb about knowledge which said, "We had a lot of knowledge but we could not use our knowledge to survive in the society," to handle the dilemmas that came to our lives.

Michael had the same feeling as me when he found out that his new students who came from other kindergarten programs did not have "actual physical practical knowledge." The new children could not adapt the knowledge they learned to their realities of lives.

> And I find when children come in to my classroom, generally if they come from a program where they've either had a lot of structure---or they haven't had---you know, even ones that had no structure, the children when they come in, and they---um---they don't know---they don't seem to have as much actual physical practical knowledge. Like I can have these children here and I can give them---um---six objects and ask them, "How many are there?" And they'll say, "Six". And sometimes I'll get kids in from another kindergarten program and you know, I'll ask them to take six things for snack and they won't count it out because they are not doing that. The number concepts that they are getting in a lot of structured programs is not related to actual physical things. They are doing these worksheets so they trace a letter out, and they don't even know what it is. They trace the shape of the number six and they color in six objects. But they don't know what they have done. All they know is that they have traced something and they colored something. They don't know any more about the number six that they did before they started working on that piece of paper. **(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 18)**

He felt that teachers should encourage their students to learn by exploring and trying things out on their own. He did not agree with teachers who structured their classrooms and taught everything to their students.

> But I find out that in a lot of structured kindergarten programs, they think, "Oh! we've got to teach them. We've got to teach them the sequence. We've got to sit them down and we've all got to go---'One'---and then we write it. And then we've all got to go 'Two' and then we draw it out and then we do number three and then we draw it out." But they don't learn from that. They learn by playing with it---trying it---trying it out and seeing what happens and then there is room in there for the teachers to

> set the environment where you have a chance to explore those things. **(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 19)**

To Michael, children, by their own nature, saw themselves as competent. They saw themselves as people who were capable of doing things in lives.

> But they---typically the kindergarten children will see themselves as being I mean they---they---they think about themselves as being competent. "I can do things." **(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 23)**

However, Michael believed that there is a time for teachers to challenge their students to help them develop their abilities to the highest point they could reach. The way to challenge the children should not destroy their self-esteem.

> I think the problem comes in when we say that everything is acceptable. I'm never going to say to a child, "That's not good enough. I want better." because I don't want to hurt their self-esteem. I think it's---it's a wrong way of thinking. I think there's a time for saying to the children, "No, you can do better. I know that you've been printing capital letters for a long time now. I want to tell you to try something a little harder." **(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 24)**

Therefore, in relating to the children Michael saw himself as a guide and a person who had power to help his children see themselves from a realistic point of view. The children should be aware that they were persons who did not know everything in life but they had the ability to learn things that came to their lives.

> So, when I think about myself as a teacher, I think about myself as a guide, an encourager and also a person who has the power to try to help these children see themselves in a realistic light. Not to be so full of themselves that they think nothing they do is wrong or that they are perfect, and not to go too far the other way and say that they think they can't do anything right, but to find some place in the middle where they see themselves as people who don't know everything and can't do everything but are learning and have the ability to try something if they put their minds to it. And that feels like a big responsibility some days. **(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 25)**

Dilemma #4 Learning About the Realities

When I was young, my grandmother always told many stories about my dad and my uncles. Whenever she began her stories, a picture of an old wooden house sitting on the bank of a running river always came to my mind. As I recollect the stories, my dad was a poor boy. He lived in the North of Thailand and his house was very close to a river. When he was young, he got sick very often. My grandmother had to hold him and walk underneath an elephant's stomach because she believed that it would make my dad healthy and help him live a long life. Now my dad is a doctor. I wonder what he would say about this story.

One of the stories that I liked most about my dad was when he first learned to swim. My dad never took swimming lessons. My grandmother put coconut shells on his arms and legs and let him go into the river. My dad would float in the water because of the coconut shells. In that way, my dad learned to swim in the river. When my dad grew up, he had to go to Bangkok to continue his study. At that time, his family was still so poor he did not have money to buy a train ticket to go to Bangkok. My dad had to sit on the roof of a train on his way to Bangkok. Every time the train passed bridges, he had to lie down on the train's roof so the bridge would not hit his body.

In Bangkok, my dad lived a life of austerity. He stayed in a temple with monks. Every morning, he had to follow the monks to get food from the people. After the monks had their meals, my dad would eat his meals. This way of life influenced him a lot as he got older. My dad always lived a Buddhist way of life.

When my dad became a doctor, he was an "ideal" doctor for me because he went to a province in the NorthEast of Thailand where I was born. During that time, this province was poor and in need of doctors. My dad worked in a hospital during the day and in his own office at night. There were a lot of poor people that went to see my dad in his clinic. Sometimes, my dad healed them for nothing because he was aware that these patients had no money. As long as I knew my dad, he never wanted to be "rich." He lived a plain and simple life. Most of his patients loved him. Some of them used his name to name their children. At one time when my dad did an operation for a local man, the man wanted to show his appreciation to my dad. He brought my dad a hen and told my dad it was the best hen he had. However, we could not keep the hen in our house because we had no space. We gave it to somebody else.

As a young child, my life was very different from my dad's. I recall, I have never been poor but I experienced a lot of poor people through my parent's patients and through my school experiences. When I was in kindergarten, I went to a Catholic school. In the Catholic school, they had a place for orphans to live. Every year on the children's day, my parents bought me a huge box of biscuits to give to the orphans in the school. A picture of the orphans in the school is still clear in my mind. I still remember a little girl who was the same age as me waiting for somebody to adopt her. I still remember. . .

On the second day of my visits in Michael's classroom, Michael mentioned that most of his children were poor. As a person who had experienced a lot of poor people, I did not pay much attention to what he said. I realized that some of the children did not bring their snacks to school. I began to be more and more conscious of the children in the classroom as I shared their stories day by day.

On Valentine's day, Michael and Laura had a party for the children. Two or three parents brought cakes, cookies and some drinks for the children. While the children were having the party, I heard Christie tell her friend, "I have to keep this (a piece of cake) for my brother." Then she wrapped a piece of cake in a napkin to save for her brother

(**Journal; March 9, 1992**). As an older sister, I was very impressed with what she had done for her little brother. She thought of him when she was having a party and decided to share her happiness with him. The girl reminded me of a lot of my personal experiences with my brother when I was young. In one of my journal entries, I responded,

> I felt that I learned a lot from Christie today. She taught me a "big" lesson about "sharing". As far as I recall, I hardly ever shared things with my brother. Every time my parents bought us toys, they always bought two of them which were exactly the same so we would not fight with each other. But in the reality of life, there were a lot of things that we wanted but we could not get them or if we could, sometimes we could have only one. Then we needed to share with each other. It would be nice if we taught our children to share things with each other since they were young. (**Journal; March 9, 1992**)

My awareness about the children began to be a dilemma when Michael and Laura had to raise funds for the children to go camping. The parents and the teachers decided to sell cakes, cookies, and donuts which each of them baked. They sold them one afternoon right after the class was over. In my fieldnotes on that day, I recorded,

> Today during the circle activity, Ken came to sit near me. Before the circle time, he told me that he needed some money to buy cakes. So, I asked him whether he wanted the money to buy cakes for himself or his family. He said that there were four people in his family, "My mom, my two sisters, and me. But this time I want to buy cake for myself." Then Michael began his teaching. Ken was still talking with his friends. Therefore, I told him to be quiet. He kept quiet for a while and then began his talking again.
>
> After recess, Ken showed me a quarter. I asked him where he found the quarter. He said, "The stairs." Then he continued saying, "Now I have money to buy a cake." However, after the story time, Lorene found a quarter on the carpet and she gave it to Laura.
>
> Before going home, some of the children bought cakes and cookies. Ken also wanted to buy one but he did not have money. He went and looked on top of a cupboard and found some pennies. He gave them to Laura. Laura told him that it was not enough. He needed a couple of pennies. Laura counted for him. It was five cents and a

> piece of cake was twenty-five cents. Therefore, Ken went back and looked for the money on top of the cupboard. He found three more pennies and showed them to his teacher. Laura told him that it was not enough. He still needed a couple of pennies. However, he could bring some money and buy it the next day.
>
> Ken went back and sat down at a desk. He did not want to leave the classroom even though a day care person came to pick him up. Laura told me that she hated to sell this stuff because she realized that some of the children did not have money to buy them and they wished that they could buy some. I asked Laura whether she would mind if I bought some for Ken. She answered, "No, it would be nice." When I gave a quarter to Ken, he was surprised. He did not know what to say to me. He just tried to choose a piece of cake. His teacher told him to say thank you to me. After he picked up a cupcake, he showed me a piece of paper which he drew a quarter on it. He said, "This is twenty-five cents." I asked him, "Could I keep this?" He said, "O.K. Do you have a copy machine at home?" **(Fieldnotes; April 27, 1992)**

When I left the school that day, I was very frustrated. I did not understand why I felt that way. As a child, I had never been in Ken's situation. I did not know what it was like to be "poor." To write about the "poor" did not mean that we understood what being "poor" was like. As I reconstructed the story, I began to think a lot about my dad. What was it like for him to be a poor child? Did it help him understand his patients better? Had he ever thought about helping them to change their condition of life? As I reflected on my dad's story, I felt he understood what it was like to be poor better than I did from looking at the way he treated his patients. As I thought about myself, I wondered if I had to deal with "poor" children, how could I, as a teacher, help empower my students to change their conditions of life?

When I looked at Michael's situation, I realized that both he and Laura needed to raise some money for the children to go on a camping trip. But at the same time, some of the children wanted to eat some candies that they did not have money to buy. I reflected on the situation again and again about what I would do if I were the classroom teacher. How could I manage the dilemma? I was aware that I could not give money to the children every time I sold candies. It might be one of the ways to cope with this dilemma but to me it did not seem to be possible because I was aware that teachers also had their families to take care of. I decided to talk to Michael about the situation on that day. I wanted to know whether it was a dilemma for him. If it was, how could he deal with it?

Michael talked about this situation in an interesting way. At the beginning of the year, he felt it was a dilemma for him. Every time they had a sale, he and Laura always bought something for the children who did not have money to buy things so that they would not feel that they were left out. He stated,

> Yah, I used---what---what we do sometimes, Laura and I, if we have a popcorn sale. Sometimes we buy extra so that everybody will have one so if we had all of the children except for four or five that buy something, have some money for something, then we will buy something for those four or five so they won't feel left out. **(Conversation; May 11, 1992, p. 3)**

In some situations, our experiences help us to live through the dilemmas in our lives. Michael had been working in this school for three years. He faced the same dilemma again and again. As a reflective teacher, Michael found a way to live with this dilemma. He did not feel bad about it anymore. Even though he wanted to be able to give his students the things they wanted, he reflected on the reality of his students' lives. When he did this, he realized that in life we do not get whatever we want. There were some things that we could get and some things we could not get. In a society that valued money, there were many things that poor people and poor children could not get. Therefore, they needed to accept this "truth."

> I don't feel too bad about that anymore, because I know it's a reality that these children don't have a lot of money and they go to the store and they'll see something that they want and they say, "I want that." And their parents have to say, "No, we don't have any money for it." So---although one part of me wants to be able to give things like that to the children, I think---but at the same time the reality is that they are not going to have all of those things. **(Conversation; May 11, 1992, p. 3)**

There were some groups of people who wanted to do something nice during Christmas time. Some of them decided to give a special present to poor children by taking them to experience the lives of the "rich." Michael, as a person, did not agree with this idea. To him, it would make poor children become more frustrated as they came home and found out that they could not have the lives they experienced in the "rich" homes.

> It's like---um---some people for very poor children they think---um---a special Christmas present is to take them and take them to a place that's very wealthy with a big house with a swimming pool and they spend the day there and they think that's a good treat for the kids but the kids go home and they go back to their own small house with two or three in a bedroom and they're very squished in and they---they feel worse afterwards than if they had---just stayed at home. **(Conversation; May 11, 1992, p. 3)**

In her book, Mama's Going to Buy You a Mockingbird (1984) Jean Little expressed a similar feeling through one of the characters when a dying husband gently teased his wife, "You can't have everything" (p. 51). In the reality of life, we cannot have everything we want. Michael was aware of this reality both in his own life and his children's lives. He expressed his feeling well in the following way.

> So, it's hard---it's a hard---it's a hard thing to---um---I guess when you're looking from the side of wanting the children to have everything. It's hard to think about the not having being as important as having. Like---um---I think for any of us, we have to make decisions all our lives about the things that we can't have just as much as all the things that we can have. We have to budget as we get older. We have to---um---we have to start to---um---you know, we look at a car or a house and we decide that there's a certain kind of house that we may want but we can't afford it so we have to settle for a smaller house or a house in a different area of the city where it's less expensive for houses, or even in a small town. **(Conversation; May 11, 1992, p. 3-4)**

In the reality of life, there were many times when we thought we lost one thing, we got another thing. Even though during the two day sale, some children might feel frustrated because they did not have money to buy what they wanted, they could go on the fieldtrip with their friends. The money that Michael got from selling cakes and cookies enabled the children who did not have money for the fieldtrip to go on the trip.

> Oh! one thing we are doing in this fieldtrip is---um---all of the children who want to go can go and so even if they don't have the money, because of fund-raising, they will be able to go to the fieldtrip. **(Conversation; May 11, 1992, p. 4)**

In Thai culture, education was powerful because we believed that we could change our condition of life from being "poor" to a better condition by making sacrifices for education. In Thailand, education could change the social class of people. In other words, a way to get out of poverty is through education. For example, my dad was very poor when he was young. After he graduated from medical school and became a doctor, his life changed. He got a lot of respect from his patients and became a "middle" class person. Both my mom and my dad believed in the power of education. When we were young, they sent my brother and me to Catholic schools because they believed that education was more important than religion. My parents were not concerned that we would change our religion but they were worried if we did not do well in school. When I was in the sixth grade, I did not do well in school. My dad was quite upset with me and that was the first and only time I saw him upset with me. As I grew up, my parents helped support our gardener's son by giving money to him to go to school. I believe that teachers have a responsibility to empower their students to change their condition of life, to get out of the condition into which they were born. Michael, from another culture at another time, was also aware of this responsibility. As a classroom teacher, he always had high expectations for his students.

> I certainly don't---I don't expect any less of these children than other children in other parts of the city. They should be able to learn just as much. **(Conversation; March 24, 1992, p. 20)**

Michael had a strong belief in children. He believed that teachers needed to trust their students in learning. Children lived up to their own best in their learning if they were trusted by people around them.

> If they (the children) see you believing in them, they will do it. If they see you saying, "Oh! I can't trust you. You can't do it" and then they won't. **(Conversation; March 24, 1992, p. 20)**

Michael's expectation and belief in his students was reflected in the children themselves. From my visits in Michael's classroom, I felt that his students were enthusiastic about learning. They were always aware of the reading and writing that happened around them. Both Michael and Laura were always willing to take dictation from any of their children. Michael had a program which he called "reading and writing buddies" for the children. He had students from grade four and five come in to read and write stories with the children. At the end of the school day, Michael asked which children would be willing to share their stories with the class. The children would come and "read" their stories. Sometimes Michael or Laura helped them read their stories. The children enjoyed reading stories, especially their own stories.

In one of my visits, when Ken, a kindergarten student, asked his buddy to write his story for him, his buddy said, "This is a reading time, not a writing time." The older boy wanted to read a story to Ken but Ken wanted to dictate his own story. I talked to Ken and he said, "I want to read my own story" **(Journal; March 9, 1992)**.

Most of the children understood that writing communicated some meaning. From time to time, they came to me and asked me to read my fieldnotes to them. They wondered what I wrote when I was in their classroom. On my second visit in their classroom, a little girl came to me and asked me to read my fieldnotes to her. I recorded,

> There were about two or three children working together on their books entitled My Healthy Body Book. When I was writing my fieldnotes, one of the girls asked me, "Did you write a story?" I said, "Yes." So, she asked, "Could you read it to me?" While I was reading my fieldnotes to her, she helped me read it. When I read the word she already knew such as "I," she read them herself. Since I drew the pictures of the examples of the activities at the "healthy table," she recognized it. When I read the word "mouth," she looked at the picture that I drew and then began to read other words herself, for example, "hair," "eyes," "ears." **(Fieldnotes; January 10, 1992)**

Michael was interested in reading Vivian Paley's books about the children in her classroom. He felt that "her (Paley's) imagination" came to "real life." As a kindergarten teacher, Michael could see her stories happen in his classroom. He saw the importance of having young children engage in playing their own stories. At one time, after Ken "read" his own story, Super Ken, Michael asked him if he would like to have some of his friends help him play his story. After Ken chose his friends to be the actors in his story, the teacher read the story and the children played. I could see the impact of Super Ken on the children in the classroom. A lot of "Super Ken" appeared in the classroom on that day. The children played the story over and over in their free-play activities.

Michael felt that fantasy was powerful for young children. He told me a story of a little girl, Lorene, during Christmas time. At that time, Lorene's dad became a Santa Claus and came to the classroom to talk to the children. Lorene could not recognize her father. When she went home, she told her father about the Santa Claus that came to her class. As Michael reflected on the story, he realized how important Santa Claus was for young children in the Western culture. He could see the importance of fantasy for young children.

When I reflected on Lorene's story, I felt that fantasy was powerful for both children and adults. In the book Sarah, Plain and Tall (1985), Caleb, a little boy whose mother died the day after he was born, asked his sister to sing his mother's song for him so that he could imagine what his mother look liked.

> "Can you remember her songs?" asked Caleb. "Mama's songs?"
>
> I turned from the window. "No. Only that she sang about flowers and birds. Sometimes about the moon at nighttime."
>
> Caleb reached down and touched Lottie's head.
>
> "Maybe," he said, his voice low, "if you remember the songs, then I might remember her too." (p. 6)

As a young child, I loved listening to stories. A person who always told me stories was my aunt. During that time, my favorite story was Little House on the Prairies. I kept asking her to tell it again and again. Every time she told it, the story was not the same. It changed from time to time. I never changed my image of myself as "Laura." One part I never forgot about was "winter" because my aunt mentioned the word "snow." As a Thai girl, I had never seen snow. Every time she talked about winter and "snow," I imagined a lot of ice all over the place. I wondered about people getting hurt when it snowed because I saw a lot of ice falling down from the sky. When I saw snow for the first time, I realized that it was totally different from my imagination.

As an adult, I loved the world of fantasy. I love to imagine the things that come to my life. There were a lot of moments that I tried to live my life through my fantasy world. However, I was aware that my world of fantasy might not be as beautiful as the fantasy world of young children because part of it was colored by the world of reality.

Lorene's story reminded me of a book The Children of Sanchez (1961). I was glad that she did not recognize that Santa Claus was her father. As a person from a different culture, I felt that Christmas time was very important for people in this culture. For young children, Santa Claus was a person who made Christmas a magic time for them. In the book The Children of Sanchez when Consuelo, one of the girls in the story, found out that her father was the Santos Reyes (Three Kings), her dream was over and she felt sad. It became a bad memory for her. She expressed,

> The next day when my father got up to go to work, he said the same as every year. "Hurry, daughter, go and see what the Reyes brought you! Go on!" I looked at my presents but I no longer saw that magic that had surrounded my toys. (p. 100)

As I reconstructed the story, I realized I was encountering a dilemma between reality and imagination. I began to wonder, "How much should we encourage our students to imagine?, How much should we prepare our children to face the reality of life?" As I reflected on my story, I was aware that imagination was very important to me. The power of imagination brought me here to a North American culture to be in Michael's and Carol's classroom. At the same time, I was conscious there was another voice, my mom's voice, that helped me come out to the reality. I was a dreamer when I was young. I loved to imagine things and talked to myself and to animals. When I read storybooks, I had a lot of imagination and sometimes felt they were "real." One day, I told my mom that if there was a flood, the world would be beautiful because we could see fish, shrimp, shells, and seaweed. It was like when we dived into the ocean and saw life in the sea. My mom told me that I should go out to the real world since if there was the flood, it would cause a lot of damage. As I grew up, I still loved the world of imagination but I was aware that there was another world outside of myself, the world of reality. Therefore, I managed my own dilemma by balancing my world, the world of imagination and reality.

In his teaching, Michael was faced with that dilemma with his students as well. Even though he had high expectations for his children, he was aware of the reality of the children. They had fewer opportunities in their learning of the world around them. He found they missed some experiences in their learning.

> The one thing that they (the children) are missing is the experience. They haven't been out and done as many things as other kids so when I was asking them in the gym. For example, one day I said, "Let's try and move like different animals." And see what kinds of ideas they had found as well. They came up with bears and they all moved around---rowr---rowr (made a noise). They moved like a dog and they were growling and doing exactly the same thing. They were down on their hands and their knees. **(Conversation; March 24, 1992, p. 18-19)**

Michael dealt with the dilemma by providing an environment for the children to learn. First of all, he demonstrated how an animal moved. After that he provided a videotape about animals moving in the ocean so the children could watch various kinds of animals moving their bodies differently.

> And so I tried something different. I tried first of all moving around in the space and I said, "What kind of animal am I?" And I didn't get down on my hands or knees and they had to guess. And then they took turns doing that and they guessed each one. And as soon as they saw that for birds---to be a bird, you didn't have to have your arms out and to be a dog, you didn't have to be on your hands and knees---but then I also showed them a videotape of a lot of animals moving in the ocean and in the water and went out on the land and so they saw these different animals moving. **(Conversation; March 24, 1992, p. 19)**

After the children watched the videotape, they moved their bodies in different ways like the animals they saw in the movie.

> And then when I went to the gym the next time when we were moving like these different animals, they were able to do it in quite different ways. **(Conversation; March 24, 1992, p. 19)**

Dilemma #5 Living with Two Realities

As a stranger from a different culture, I was very surprised when I found out that North American kindergartens were half-day programs and that most of them were connected to elementary schools. In my culture, most of our kindergartens were full-day programs. Most were in private schools. Some of them were connected to elementary schools but some were not.

When I was young, my kindergarten was a part of a whole school. We had kindergarten, elementary level, and junior high level in the same school. As a kindergartner, I really wanted to be in grade one. I kept asking my aunt when I could go into grade one. I was looking forward to dressing in an elementary uniform. To me, it was more beautiful than a kindergarten uniform. The most important thing for me was that I could be a grown-up child. During that time, I was aware that when I was a grade one student, I could bring money to buy lunch by myself. I did not have to eat the lunch the school prepared for kindergartners. I did not have to take a nap during the day. I could go for recess at the same time as other children in the school. I realized I wanted to be like older children and be a part of the school. I wanted to know what it was like to be a grade one student, to be a part of a whole school?

The feeling of loneliness came to my mind again when I began my career as a kindergarten teacher in a school that did not have any connection to the elementary school. This time it was more severe than any other times that I experienced during my school years. I still remembered how lonely I was in my first year of teaching. Every teacher in the school knew each other and they all had their own groups even a new teacher who came at the same time with me. She knew other teachers before. The teachers knew what they were expected to do in their teaching. During that time, I felt I did not know anything about teaching or, if I knew, my image of teaching was different from what I experienced in the school. The more I looked at other teachers around me, the more I felt that they were "expert" in their teaching. As time passed, I began to look for somebody to be my group, somebody who I could imitate so I would not feel different anymore. I started to imitate a teacher whose class I was taking over because she planned to continue her studies. She was very nice to me and I felt that we were in the same group. After she had gone to continue her studies, I took over her class and began to do the same things as she did. I still remembered the day that one of my colleagues told me what I was doing was not what the administrators expected. I was totally shocked and after that I began to be awake, to be myself again.

I deeply understood when Michael told me that when he first came to teach in the school as a kindergarten teacher, he felt isolated from the rest of the school. One of the reasons was that his class only attended school for half days and the program was totally different from the rest of the school.

> When I first came here, they had never talked about the kindergartens. They always talked about grade one to grade six. They said, "Oh! we have to get all of our students." They said, "All of our students will have to---to be doing this activity. We'll have children from grade one all the way up to grade six doing this family grouping." And I had to say, "Kindergarten, what about us?" "Oh! Do you want to be part of this---be part of the school?" They asked, "Oh! O.K." And then they would plan activities in the afternoon so we wouldn't have a chance to be part of them. So, I had to say, "Well, can we do them in the morning and then the kindergarten can be there?" But they didn't think that I wanted to be there. They thought it was quite a different program. They didn't think about us as being school---part of the school. "Oh, they're just playing in there, like a daycare." **(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 6)**

After Michael worked as a part-time kindergarten teacher, his principal saw that Michael was very good in communicating with both young children and adults. He liked the activities that Michael provided for his students to connect with their personal lives. He offered Michael extra time to work with some children who had problems.

> That was the principal in the first year who---he saw that I had good communication skills with people with children. And he saw what I was doing with children in being able to connect with them. And so, he offered me---he said he had some children he wanted me to work with. He offered me some extra time because I was only working half time. **(Conversation; October 13, 1992, p. 3)**

Michael believed he was good at counselling children because of his training in Early Childhood. When working with the children, Michael focused more on who the children were and where they came from rather than on the outside criteria of what teachers and children were supposed to do. Michael believed that each child was unique in his/her ability and needs and teachers should build from where the children were.

> I believed that I was better at it (counselling) because of my Early Childhood training where the child is the focus, where you're making decisions not based on---Not all of your decisions are based on outside criteria of what children and teachers are supposed to be doing. Not this curriculum coming down saying, "You will do this or else." The philosophy in Early Childhood---the philosophy I trained with that we need to look at ourselves and the situation that is unique. And it took the children as being unique in their abilities and their needs and then we have to work from where they are and help to bring them to higher levels just as we change in the way that we view things. **(Conversation; October 13, 1992, p. 3-4)**

Michael felt that his work as a school counselor helped other teachers realize that kindergarten was a part of the school. As a kindergarten teacher, he tried to do a lot of things with other classes. He asked the children from other classes to come to read and write with his children. However, Michael had a feeling that if he was only a kindergarten teacher, he might feel isolated because he would not have a lot of interactions with other children in the school.

> If I was just a kindergarten teacher---if that was all I did was having to teach in kindergarten, I think I might feel a lot more isolated---a lot more like an island but because I'm doing the counselling then I see other children in the school and I talk with the teachers and work with them. And I really do talk about kindergarten and so I take my children and we'll go out and do things in the other classrooms like

> Mrs. Bell's class comes in and does reading with us and so then we have a chance to interact. And we have children come in from Mrs. Johnson's class. They come in and visit and so I get them to share their work, what they are doing and I think that helps. But I really---I really think in many ways if I wasn't doing that, we would be more---if I wasn't doing counselling, we would be more of an island. **(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 5)**

The more Michael reflected on his teaching, the more he felt that his work as a school counselor helped him to be a part of the school. It helped him to deal with his dilemma of kindergarten as an island apart from the rest of the school. Michael felt that his colleagues liked his work as a school counselor. Therefore, they came to visit his classroom and saw what was going on in the classroom. Michael felt that even though they did not understand his kindergarten program, they appreciated what he had done with the children.

> Well, they (other teachers) know what I'm doing and then they like the work I do as a counselor. I've had a few teachers write letters for me---um---the sort so that I can get certified as a teacher permanently. They are writing about what they see happening in the kindergarten class. They hadn't been in often but occasionally they come in and visit. Each of the teachers has been in to talk to me in the morning once, I would say. And then they come in and they see things going on. They don't understand it really well but they know that the children are busy and so they---from that they believe it's a good program and so they say I'm good at doing the things in the kindergarten. **(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 6)**

At the same time, as a kindergarten teacher, Michael realized that he had a responsibility to build a bridge between his classroom and the rest of the school.

> But it's a---but I think if we are going to be an island if we see ourselves as an island then we'll be one. I think we have a responsibility to reach out. **(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 7)**

As I reconstructed Michael's story, it reminded me of my past experiences as a kindergarten teacher. I remember how busy I was at the end of the school year. During that time, I tried to prepare my students to be ready for both a school exam and the entrance exams to the first grade in other schools. I drilled my students on reading, writing, and calculating and I thought that all my students were ready to take the exams.

Therefore, I was totally shocked when the parents told me that their children talked to other children during the exams. One story that I have never forgotten was about a little boy who did not do any exams because he sang during the exams. As a classroom teacher, I felt that I knew this little boy well enough. He was a smart little boy who loved to sing and tell stories. He loved imagination and always told stories to himself. As a person who loved telling stories, I always encouraged my students to sing and tell stories in front of the class. I had never told them that they could not talk or sing during the exam. When my children went on to the first grade, some of the parents came back and told me that their children were punished because they walked from desk to desk and talked during their studies.

As I reflected on my story of teaching, I realized more about the reality of the school, that is, there was a big gap between kindergarten and grade one. As a kindergarten teacher, I did not adequately build the bridge. I had not prepared my children to face the reality outside of their kindergarten classroom. I had not talked to them about what it was like for them to be in grade one.

However, as a kindergarten teacher, Michael realized the reality of the school. He was aware of how important it was for his children to have a smooth transition from kindergarten to grade one and tried to build the bridge from kindergarten to grade one.

> They need that (a smooth transition) and it can happen if you are in the school and know who is going to be the teacher next year and which classes they're going to be in. **(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 7)**

In the General Educational Goals for Kindergarten that he submitted to his principal at the beginning of the school year, Michael wrote a section on program continuity and the six steps that he was going to use to help his students make the transition from kindergarten to grade one.

> Program Continuity:
>
> Children will make the transition from kindergarten to grade-one in a smooth and continuous manner. They will learn the necessary skills to cope in a grade one environment. They will also engage in activities with the grade-one class and students throughout the year, with a stronger emphasis on the final two months. The program itself will more closely resemble the grade-one environment as the year progresses.
>
> Kindergarten to Grade One: Making the Change
>
> Step One: The Kindergarten and Grade One class do activities together. (Fieldtrips, physical education, art, music, social studies)
>
> Step Two: Grade One students visit the Kindergarten class and talk to small groups of Kindergarten students about what happens in Grade One. "I remember what it was like to start Grade One."
>
> Step Three: Kindergarten students visit the Grade One class for a tour in small groups. They may then take part in a few small activities.
>
> Step Four: The Kindergarten and Grade One teacher trade classes. This gives the Kindergarten students a chance to meet the Grade One teacher and do some typical Grade One activities in their own classroom.
>
> Step Five: The Kindergarten and Grade One students switch classrooms and teachers. This gives the Kindergarten students a chance to work with the Grade One teacher in a typical Grade One environment.
>
> Step Six: Toward the end of the school year, the program in Kindergarten more closely resembles the Grade One program.

Michael felt that it was his responsibility and a grade one teacher's responsibility to prepare the children to get ready for grade one.

> We're doing more and more things with the grade one class over the next while because the children are getting ready for grade one. At the start of the year, I talked to the grade one teacher about doing things together and she was not interested at all. She said, "Oh! their behavior is too tough. It's too hard for me right now. Just give me some time to get them in control." And now I'm hoping she will be ready but whether she's ready or not we need to because they need to start getting ready for grade one. The end of the year is coming up and they've had experiences with older kids in the school. But they're not sure what goes on in grade one. I'm going to be setting it up. I'll set it up as a tour for the kids and I have to convince her to exchange some children. I'll have her take my class in the grade one and I'll take her class in the kindergarten and do things or do half and half for some activities. **(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 7)**

On my last visit in Michael's classroom, he set up desks and chairs in the role-play area as in the grade one classroom. Michael told me that when the children first came in, they said, "There is a real school here" **(Fieldnotes; June 10, 1992)**.

It was very interesting to listen to what the children said about kindergarten and grade one. I got a feeling that they saw a big difference between kindergarten and grade one. They might notice the difference by listening to what their parents and the people around them who talked about grade one. I still remember when I was in grade one, my life changed a lot. A "special" teacher came to my house every evening to help my brother and me do homework. I had to memorize English vocabulary every day. I could not talk and walk in the classroom as I did in kindergarten. As I grew up, I realized that grade one was not what I expected it to be. As I reflected on Michael's story and my story of teaching, I was aware of how important it was for me, as a kindergarten teacher, to prepare my students to get ready for grade one.

In her book, Ramona The Brave, Cleary (1975) described the difference between kindergarten and grade one very clearly when Mrs. Griggs, a grade one teacher, told her children about what they were supposed to do in grade one.

> The bell rang and after Mrs. Griggs chose Joey to lead the flag salute, she made a little speech about how grown-up they were now that they were in the first grade and how the first grade was not a place to play like kindergarten. The class was here to work. They had much to learn, she was here to help them. (p. 64-65)

Michael, as a teacher, realized that the expectations he had for his children were different than what the grade one teacher expected. He was aware of what the grade one teacher and some of the teachers in the school thought about his teaching. "They don't think I teach properly" (**Conversation; February 7, 1992, p. 7**). The grade one teacher told him that when the children first came to her classroom, they could not print properly. The children printed capital letters all the time. So, she wanted Michael to "unteach" and "reteach" them.

> And I got complaints from the grade one teacher saying, "Well, when they (the children) came in, they were printing this way, you know. They were printing all capitals. They're printing---they don't make the letters properly." She asked me to unteach them and reteach them to print properly. (**Conversation, February 7, 1992, p. 8**)

Therefore, Michael explained to the grade one teacher the reason he taught his children to print the capital letters before the lower case letters. In his point of view, the capital letters were a lot easier for the children to learn to print than the lower case ones. Most of the capital letters could be reversed and they would be the same.

> Children, we know when they have print in their mind, then they try to take it and write it on their own. Then they reverse it a lot. O.K. Look at capital letters. Even over here (pointing to writing on the wall), we've got the letter A. You can reverse it and it's just the same for capital A. You reverse the H and it's the same. You reverse the capital I, it's the same. You reverse the M, it's the same. You reverse the O, it's the same. You reverse the T and the U and the V and the W and the X and the Y and they are all the same. (**Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 13-14**)

Also, Michael felt that most of the capital letters had symmetrical shapes which would fit into boxes and he felt that they were easier for the children to visualize them.

> And the majority of capital letters you can fit into a box, or just a symmetrical shape, a square, they'll fit in there and so they (the children) can---it is easy for them to visualize it. **(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 14)**

For the lower case letters, Michael found that there were only a few of them that could be reversed and still remain the same. Also he felt that it was harder for young children to print the small letters because the small letters went off the center points and most of them went up and down.

> If you go to lower case, you can only reverse the I, the L, the O, the T, the V, and the W, and the X. So, there are fewer of them that can be reversed. And the other thing is that there is---in lower case---is---they go off the center point and there are parts going higher and things going lower.....**(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 14)**

From his experiences of observing and working with the children, Michael found that when the children first started to write their names, their printing was very big. After they learned to print for a while, their printing was getting smaller because they developed their fine motor skills. He found that when the children could write their names within a range of a half a centimeter and a centimeter high, they were ready to print the small letters.

> They learn their names and they learn the letters of their names and then pretty soon they are looking at other words. And they are starting to write those and they're writing combination of letters and then there comes a point that at the start, their printing is really big. Then it starts shrinking down. It is getting smaller---smaller---smaller because they have the fine motor skills and usually by the time they can write their name at about half a centimeter height---between half a centimeter and a centimeter high, when they can do it that small, then I find they're ready to do lower case letters. **(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 14)**

As a classroom teacher, Michael felt that one of his responsibilities was to build the children's confidence in writing. He wanted his children to see themselves as "writers." Therefore, he felt that when the children were enthusiastic about learning to write, the teacher should not teach something that was too hard for them to learn because the children would get bored and lack the confidence in learning to write.

> If I were to have those kids the first time when they start printing, "I want to do my name. Show me my name," then I give them the lower case and say, "This is the way it's going to be." Pretty soon they're tired of this. "I don't want to do this." They start looking around. They say, "Can I go somewhere else?" And they think, "I hate printing. That's too hard." So, they don't see themselves as writers. They don't see themselves as printers. **(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 15)**

Michael felt that his work as a school counselor helped him to be a part of a whole school. But when he had an opportunity to visit another classroom to see how a teacher set up her classroom, he felt he did not have enough time to prepare the classroom environment for his students because he had to handle two different kinds of jobs at the same time.

> One thing I miss because I'm working two jobs at this school, I feel bad about not having as much time for my kindergarten class as I'd like to. **(Conversation; May 11, 1992, p. 6)**

Michael felt that it would be better if he could work as a full-time kindergarten teacher because he could devote all of his time to prepare the classroom environment.

> If all I was doing was teaching kindergarten all day long then I would have---I could devote all my time to just this space---this classroom space. I find because I only spend a half a day in here, working with kindergarten children, that I don't do as much or as many different things with the space as I would like to be doing. **(Conversation; May 11, 1992, p. 6)**

As Michael reflected on what happened in the classroom that he went to visit, he felt that it reminded him of his image of what a kindergarten classroom should be. At the same time, he was aware of the reality of his work. He realized that he could not devote all of his time to his kindergarten classroom. He needed to divide his work time between his job as a school counselor and his kindergarten teaching.

> Oh! I'd love to have something like that (talking about a pond study table). For the last two years I've thought of it. But for a half---for a half day program for me to take the time to go and find a field and scoop up enough five gallon pails full of water to set up a table like that and then arrange to go back and get fresh water every couple of days. So, it doesn't go sour. It's a lot of work and a lot of time to invest in that and I have to look at my time---the time I have because I've got obligations for the school as a school counselor---like this morning when one of the girls came in at recess time and she said that she needs some help in making decision because she has to---her parents are separated. She has to decide whether she wants to live with her mom or her dad and---both her mom and her dad have something new in their life right now. But they separated for a few years ago. So, she's really having difficulty. On Thursday she has to make a decision so she came in to talk about that. **(Conversation; May 11, 1992, p. 6)**

As a school counselor, Michael was aware of his responsibility to get to know the children in the school so that he could help them more.

> So, I'm going to---I need to spend some time with her (the girl) this afternoon but I have those kinds of obligations. And I know there are children out there who are not coming to me because they don't know me well enough. And so, I have to find ways of getting to know them so they can learn to trust me. **(Conversation; May 11, 1992, p. 7)**

Nested Dilemmas

As I looked through Michael's story, I saw a story of myself within his story. The way Michael managed one dilemma and another dilemma emerged reminded me of one of my life stories. As far as I remember, my parents always wanted to raise my brother and me to be independent children. Whatever we wanted to do, we could do. However, as working parents, they did not have time to take care of us. When I was a little girl, I hardly saw my parents. Both of them worked really hard. They went to work before I woke up and came home after I had already gone to bed. Most of the time, we stayed with our aunt and grandmother. Both of them loved us very much and tried to take good care of us. They had never let us do things on our own. I remember, even though I was in third grade, I still had somebody help me dress and put socks on my feet. When my mom found out about this, she was very upset because that was not her image of her children. My mom was afraid that when I grew up, I might not develop my own thinking and would depend on other people's ideas all the time. As a mother, she really wanted her children to learn to help themselves and be independent thinkers. However, as a doctor my mom was aware that she did not have time to be with us. How could a woman be a "good" mother and a "good" doctor at the same time? Bateson (1989) in her book Composing a Life reminded me of my mother when she talked about the multiple lives of women and how they struggled to combine various commitments in their lives. In her life, my mother always searched for ways to combine the multiple commitments of being a doctor and a mother. When I was a small child, she sometimes took me to work with her and the nurses took care of me when she was with her patients. When I grew up, we moved to a new house which could house both the residential area and a private practice so I could be closer to her. However, the dilemma of how to raise my brother and me to be independent people might be in my parents' minds all the time.

Both my mom and dad might have been thinking about this dilemma for a long time before they decided to ask me about going to a boarding school in Bangkok. As a young child, I was always taught that education was very important. Everybody around me kept telling me that I needed to be a good student and that I had to work hard in school. Every time I cried because I did not want to go to school, my aunt would tell me that if I did not want to go to school, I would be a beggar when I grew up. During that time, I did not want to live a beggar's life when I grew up. Therefore, I decided to go to my kindergarten class. I was not surprised that I was very glad when my parents first mentioned to me about going to the boarding school in Bangkok. As a little girl, I realized how important education was for our family.

I remember that I was totally desperate when my mom and dad took us to a school. I was scared and confused at the same time. Everything was like a dream for me. However, I did not cry at all when my parents left. As I re-constructed the story, the picture of my brother and me waving to our parents as they left was still clear in my mind. After my first day in the boarding school, I cried every single day. Everything was like a nightmare for me. My life was totally changed. However, when my parents asked me whether I wanted to go back and study in my previous school, I said, "No" because I knew that I could get a better education in Bangkok. But at the same time I was very lonely and missed my parents. I had to learn to deal with my feeling of sadness.

As I reflected on this story of my life, I was aware that as my parents tried to manage their dilemma, they unconsciously created another dilemma for me, their daughter. This dilemma seemed to be the one that I learned to live with all of my school life. I had to weigh what I wanted for my life, to stay with the people I loved or to get "good" education. As I grew up, I learned that sometimes I could get both of them but sometimes I could not. Therefore, I had to learn to deal with it.

Michael also was aware of the dilemmas he faced. He realized, as a kindergarten teacher, he wanted to create a lot of things for his students. He wanted to do the best he could for them. At the same time he realized the needs of the children he was working with as a school counsellor. He wanted to do the best for the children as both a kindergarten teacher and a school counselor. As Michael reflected on his dilemma, he was conscious that he could not do everything he wanted. Therefore, he decided that he needed to manage his dilemma by limiting the way he engaged in kindergarten teaching, so he could also handle the counselling.

> So somewhere along the way I've got to say, "Well, I'm going to have to draw a line here. I won't be able to do all these exciting things that I would like to do." So, I feel guilty sometimes about what I'm not doing that I'd like to be doing, that I know I should be doing. **(Conversation; May 11, 1992, p. 7)**

As I re-constructed Michael's story and my own story, it was interesting to see how we both dealt with our dilemmas. The ways we managed our dilemmas reflected who we were, where we came from, and how we saw ourselves in relationship to the world around us. As human beings, both of us were aware that we could not have everything we wanted to. Sometimes we had to deal with our dilemmas by making choices and by learning to live with the decisions we made. Sometimes we could not even make any choices. We just had to learn to live with our dilemmas. However, in our lives, there was nothing that could stay the same forever. Things were changing all the time. Therefore, there was no "absolute" or "perfect" answer to how we should manage our teaching dilemmas. As teachers, we needed to learn to live with our dilemmas day by day. Michael, as a person, expressed himself well in the following way.

> We all have a rough day. It's a day when it is hard for us to concentrate. And when I think about the day and I think back over things to see if maybe there's something that I could have changed so that there are less problems or maybe it's an overall organizational problem where I can change the order or do something else. But other times it's something we just have to live with. Um---but---um I think generally what I just realized---with my experience is that it's not the end of the world. It's only one rough day and we'll get over it. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 5)**

The more I reflected on Michael's story and my story, the more I realized that our lives were full of dilemmas. It seemed as if dilemmas were a way of life. We lived our lives through dilemmas. As we managed one dilemma, another dilemma emerged. As human beings, we had to deal with our dilemmas all the time. It seemed to me there was no "perfect" way to manage dilemmas that came to our lives. The way we used to deal with our dilemmas changed from time to time depending upon who we were, our situations and the time that we lived our stories. I began to be aware that life did not need to be "perfect" to be fine. It could be good enough. Our dilemmas had never been solved by our decisions. I believed they always kept coming back from time to time. As I looked through our stories, I was aware that both Michael and I tried to find our best way to manage our dilemmas.

Chapter VI

A Story of Myself As a Researcher

> For a thought to change the world, it must first change the life of the man who carries it. It must become an example. (Camus cited in Greene, 1973, p. 3)

"What did you do this morning?" This was my father's favorite question. As I remember, my father loved asking my brother and me this question every day. As a child, I sometimes did not want to answer. There were some days that I was too tired to think back about my daily activities. However, my father asked us the same question every day and I knew he expected some answers. During school vacations, my father did not care what activities we chose to do. He just wanted us to think back about what we did during the mornings. His next question was always, "What are you going to do in the afternoon?" As I grew up, these two questions became a part of me. I loved to think back about what I did during the day and what I was going to do the next day before I went to sleep. As a researcher, I also thought about my language and actions and wondered how they affected other people.

When I started writing my research proposal, Dr. Jean Clandinin, one of my committee members, encouraged me to look back into my teaching stories in order to find narrative beginnings for my research questions. Even though I had written an autobiography, I felt I still had to answer my father's two questions. As I reflected on my stories of teaching, I began to be aware of the dilemmas that I lived throughout my teaching and the ways I managed them. I began to wonder about other teachers' dilemmas and the ways they managed them. Therefore, in my research proposal, I asked two research questions, "What dilemmas do teachers of young children encounter and how do they cope with their dilemmas?" As I wrote this chapter, I realized that the questions I asked came from what I experienced in my teaching. Brimfield, Roderick, and Yamamoto (1983) reminded me that I, as a researcher, brought my stories with me and those stories framed my research questions. They said,

> [A] Research career is unmistakably a reflection of the person that he or she has been. Of all the possibilities, one raises only certain questions. (p. 15)

In an attempt to answer my two research questions, I joined the lives of two friends, Carol and Michael, for six months. As friends, we shared our stories, our concerns and our expectations for the children in their classrooms. As I journeyed with them in this research, I kept a journal in which I recorded my feelings, actions, mistakes, and reflections with the hope that writing might lead me to knowledge. The more I reflected on my journal entries, the more I realized that as Carol and Michael lived their dilemmas through their everyday teaching, I, as a researcher, lived my dilemmas through my inquiry. I began to be aware of the discontinuity of our lives as I listened to their stories and my stories.

I realized that my life as a person, a teacher, and a researcher did not stop as I began my research journey. I still lived, told, and retold my stories in the research. As a researcher, I was aware that I became a part of the research journey (Clandinin, 1992). I was not only a researcher but also a participant of the research. My experiences with Carol and Michael in our research prompted me to reflect on myself as a person, a learner, a teacher, and a researcher. I saw my research journey with the two teachers as an opportunity to confront myself, examine my ideas and beliefs in order to increase what I knew, to understand myself and my relationships to the world (Brimfield, Roderick, & Yamamoto, 1983). Kubie (cited in Brimfield, Roderick, & Yamamoto, 1983) reminded me that self-knowledge was very important for me to grow as a teacher and as a researcher.

> This is why it is impossible to produce scholars who in the true sense of the word are wise ... if they know nothing about themselves. Without self-knowledge in depth, the

> master of any field will be a child in human wisdom and human culture. (p. 1)

Kubie drew my attention to the importance of looking into myself at the same time as I journeyed with the teachers in our research study. Cousins (1981) also helped confirm my belief about the importance of self-knowledge. The great failure of education, as Cousins, described, was that,

> It (education) has made people tribe-conscious rather than species-conscious. It has put limited identification ahead of ultimate identification. It has attached value to the things man does but not to what man is. Man's institutions are celebrated but not man himself. (p. 27)

Both Kubie and Cousins drew my attention to the significance of access into myself and my individual knowledge. Therefore, I felt that it was very important for me as a learner, a teacher, and a researcher to tell my own stories of dilemmas.

Who Am I in the Research?

Who am I in the research? Who am I in the schools? Who am I in the classrooms? I raised these questions for myself each time I visited the schools. As a stranger from another culture, I was always aware that I might have to answer these questions. When I began my research journey, there were many times that I was asked to answer one of these questions by the students, the parents, or other teachers in the schools. Even though I knew these questions might be asked, I found it difficult to answer because I was still trying to figure out who I was in the research. It was a dilemma I learned to live with on my research journey.

On my first day of the research journey, I was very glad that the principal at Carol's school did not question me about who I was. He only asked me if I knew Carol. I felt very comfortable in telling him Carol and I had been good friends for a long time and I wanted to be with her in her classroom for six months. However, at Michael's school when one of the teachers asked me if I was a student teacher, I was frustrated because I knew that I was not a student teacher. But how could I explain to her who I was? I decided to tell her I was Michael's friend.

As I reflected on the two situations, I realized I did not explain my research to them. I did not even mention it. It might have been because I was not sure what I was going to do in the classrooms. I was not sure what my role was going to be. Later, at Carol's school, I experienced almost the same question but in a different way, a way that shocked me for a long time. One of the junior high students asked me, "What grade are you in?" I remembered feeling shocked and uncomfortable about answering the question. I had not expected this question. I began to ask myself, "Who am I? What am I doing here? Why am I here? How old am I?" At the same time I realized I had to give him an answer because he and his friends were waiting for one. They were curious about who I was and what I was doing in their school. They may have been trying to figure out who I was and have decided I might be a student in their school. At the time I was conscious that I had to give him an answer so I could get into the building. I tried to think quickly about what grade I could be in but I could not think of any. Therefore, I decided to give him a short and quick answer. I told him, "I am a researcher." As I looked at his facial expression, I realized he was surprised. However, he quickly let me get into the building. As I walked past him into the school building, I felt embarrassed all over my body. I began to ask myself, "Am I a 'real' researcher? Am I a friend of a teacher? Am I both a friend and a researcher? And if I am not both a friend and a researcher, who am I?"

As I reflected on my work with the two teachers, I began to realize that I, as a person, developed a relationship with each of them in a unique way because of who they were, the time, and the context of their classrooms. I was aware that my relationship with Carol was different from my relationship with Michael. I brought my stories with me to their classrooms and my stories framed my relationships with them and the way I constructed their stories. I constructed their stories from what I heard, saw, experienced, and thought as I lived with them in their classrooms (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). I agreed with Coles (1989) that the stories I heard from my two teachers were to some considerable extent a function of who I was as I heard their stories. I told their stories through my eyes. The more I constructed and re-constructed their stories, the more I saw my stories within their stories.

I began to be aware that I also saw my stories retold through Carol's and Michael's eyes. Carol and Michael selected the stories they wanted to share with me. Their expectations of what I wanted to learn and to hear and their decisions about what should be told derived partly from their sense of who I was with them (Agar, 1980). As they shared their stories with me, they constructed and re-constructed their lives at the same time.

Their stories were shaped by my stories. I selected which of their stories I wanted to tell. My way of selecting stories depended on my understanding of their stories. For example, Michael often mentioned his dilemma with a school board but I did not pick that story to tell. I did not feel that I could tell the story well enough to capture his intentions. Bateson (1989) helped me think about how we, both the researcher and the participants, share our stories as a way of composing our lives. She wrote,

> The accounts as I heard them are themselves part of the process of composing lives. They are autobiographical, not biographical, shaped by each person's choice and selective memory and by the circumstances of our work together. No doubt they are shaped again by my own selections, resonating variously with my own experience. (p. 33)

The more I reflected on our stories, the more I realized that the three of us, as people, had different ways of telling our stories to different people depending upon the context and time. I was awakened to the idea that at the same time as I was doing research with the teachers, I was researching myself. My stories, as Clandinin (1992) mentioned, were lived, told and retold in the research process. In one of my journal entries, I wrote,

> "What is research? What does the word 'research' mean to me?" I began to see research more and more as an inquiry into myself as well as into my teachers. I began to look into "myself" more and more and began to create my own "truth." I thought that I lived with Carol and Michael both in my mind and in their "real" lives. I realized that I was with them in my mind more than in their "real" lives. Even though my body was not with them, I still had conversations with them in my mind. I tried to figure out my own "truth" from what I saw and talked to them in their classrooms. I found that I dialogued with myself more and more as I journeyed into my teachers' lived experiences. I also looked back into myself through my teachers' eyes. I was doing a research with myself as well as with the teachers. The research became part of me more and more. I began to see how Carol's and Michael's stories integrated with my stories and became a new story, our research story. **(Journal; February 6, 1992)**

As I listened to the teachers' stories, I realized I listened to my stories at the same time. Like a photographer who came to know himself/herself through the pictures he/she took, I, as a researcher, came to understand myself and my teaching from listening to and working with the two teachers' stories. I learned that knowledge came not from detachment but from living in connection with myself and with other people, from being embedded in the conditions of life (Gilligan, 1982; Heilbrun, 1988). I sometimes imagined myself in the teachers' situations. I began to see new possibilities for reliving my story of teaching. Bateson (1989), in Composing a Life, wrote that women understand their own lives through reading and listening to their friends' stories. She wrote,

> Women today read and write biographies to gain perspective on their own lives. Each reading provokes a dialogue of comparison and recognition, a process of memory and articulation that makes one's own experience available as a lens of empathy. We gain even more from

> comparing notes and trying to understand the choices of our friends. When one has matured surrounded by implicit disparagement, the undiscovered self is an unexpected resource. Self knowledge is empowering. (p. 5)

During my period of self-discovery, of learning about myself by immersing myself in the lives of the two teachers, I realized that my life "in its daily ordinariness, not in its labored cleverness, was worth attention" (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 142). Even as I began to manage this dilemma of who I was in the research, a new dilemma emerged. I began to ask myself, "What is qualitative research?" In one of my journal entries, I reflected,

> "What is qualitative research?" I saw qualitative research as a process of trying to understand both the participants' stories and a researcher's story. To me, the most important thing about doing qualitative research was the process of doing it, not the product. The publishing of qualitative research was something else. "Is it still research?" It might be only the process of doing qualitative research that was research. One of the best things in doing qualitative research might be the process of trying to understand ourselves more than something else. The teachers' stories allowed us to look back at ourselves through their stories. We dialogued with ourselves through their stories. We lived in a moment (reflection-in-action) by dialoguing with their stories. At the same time, when we had conversations with them, we encouraged them to do both reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action. The teachers could understand themselves more and more by dialoguing with themselves. **(Journal; February 7, 1992)**

Throughout the inquiry with the two teachers, I wondered how the research affected their lives. As I reflected on my journal entries, I could see how much the research affected me. I saw my growth both as a person, a teacher, and a researcher. I began to be more aware of myself and to get insight into other people's perspectives. I realized that self was not only me. Self was outside of me as it was inside of me. Cousins (1981) helped to reaffirm my discovery about self. He wrote,

> We are more than the shadow of our substance, more than a self-contained and self-sealing entity. We come to life in others and are affected by their hurts or their needs or their

> moral splendor. When we deny this, we hammer at the essence of our own being. (p. 35)

In one of my journal entries, I reflected,

> "What is 'self'?" I have been asking myself this question for a long time. "What is 'self'? And what is inside of 'self'? Is it only 'me' or is there somebody else in 'self'?"
>
> As I have been thinking, I thought that there are both sides in "self." There is not only "me" in "self" but also there is somebody else in "self." When I thought about myself, I found that I thought only "me" in myself. I forgot to listen to other voices in myself. I only saw "me" jumping and playing and acting all around in myself. "Where is somebody else? Where are they? Are they still alive? Or are they gone?" I might make them die by killing them softly. "Can I still be alive without them?" Maybe I die with them at the same time that I kill them.
>
> "Self" always has both sides. One is the world of "me." The other is the world of "others." We cannot separate two worlds from each other. They needed to go together. We couldn't live in the world without help from other people. I mean we really need each other both the people who are the same as us and those who are different from us. "How can I be 'me' without 'you'?" It's you who makes me "alive" and stands at this point. I can't be "me" without "you." You are as important as "me." I should listen more to what you try to tell me. I shouldn't ignore you as I always did because I know that without you, I can't be "alive" anymore. **(Journal; July 7, 1992)**

After I finished writing Carol's and Michael's narrative accounts, I began to reflect on those accounts. The ways I wrote the accounts were different in some respects and similar in others. They were similar in that in both of them I reflected on education, experience, and life. This reminded me of Dewey (1938) who said that education, experience, and life were inextricably intertwined. However, I talked about life in different ways in the two accounts. In Carol's narrative account, I related her stories to life as a whole. In Michael's narrative account, I related his stories more to my individual life both as a girl and a teacher. Both accounts were unique in their own ways. Partly the uniqueness had to do with the teachers themselves. They were "real" people, different from each other depending upon their narratives, the ways they constructed their world, their classroom contexts, and time. At the same time, I was aware that it was my sense of my own life that made me believe I could easily understand their stories. As I reflected on the narrative accounts of the two teachers, I realized that my relationship with them affected the way we constructed and reconstructed our stories. Clandinin and Connelly (1993) reminded me that my relationship to the two teachers shaped both the the way I constructed the field text and the research text. They wrote:

> If the researcher cares about the ongoing relationship to the participants as well as to the ways the research account is read and for what purpose, it will make a difference to the way the research account is written. (p. 24)

Clandinin and Connelly drew my attention to the importance of the relationship between the researcher and the participants which affected the way research stories were written. As a researcher and a friend to the teachers, I felt that the knowledge of the relationship between myself and the two teachers was crucial for readers to understand our stories (Langness & Frank, 1981). Without understanding my relationships with Carol and Michael, our stories would be less meaningful. As persons, the three of us brought our stories into the research and these stories affected our relationships with each other and our collaborative stories in the research journey.

My Relationship with Carol

Whenever I thought about my relationship with Carol, I thought, "Carol is my friend." Before beginning the study, I had known Carol for two years. I did not feel that she was a stranger. To me, Carol was a friend, an old friend. When I went to her school on the first morning of the work in the classroom, I felt like I went to visit an old friend in her new classroom. I was excited about beginning my new research journey and about working with Carol in her classroom. My first concern when I saw Carol that day was how she felt. I wanted to know how she was.

After the children left on the first day, we sat down and started to talk about our research. Even though previously we had always sat down and talked to each other about her classroom, this time I felt a little bit strange. It was not as usual, it was more formal. Maybe it was because this study was my dissertation research and it had to be published. Both of us were quite careful about our relationships. We began our conversations, as usual, by talking about the children, her teaching, and her arrangement of the classroom. That day Carol mentioned that the day before, she re-read my proposal to make sure that she wanted to go on with my project. During that moment I was scared and felt on edge because I really wanted her to be part of my study. I felt as if I was facing a "big" dilemma. "What should I do if Carol did not want to be part of my research? How can I find a new teacher who is interested in the same thing as me and knew me well enough to work with me?" At the same time I was glad I had given both teachers copies of the proposal to read because it gave them opportunities to see the research as a whole. It also gave them opportunities to know me better both as a person and a teacher. We talked about anonymity in the research. I told Carol it was up to her. We agreed we would wait until the research was done and then Carol would make the decision about using her "real" name or not.

As I reflected on the situation that day, I began to explore my relationship with Carol. I realized as I sat down and talked to her that day I was not only her friend but also a researcher. Carol allowed me to be in her classroom, to be part of her life because she viewed me as one of her friends. My reading of Shanklin (1979) encouraged me to think of a researcher as a photographer. I began to see myself as a metaphoric photographer who came to Carol's classroom. She was aware that every time I came to her classroom, I came with a "camera" in my hands to take word pictures of her and her children. Carol allowed me to take "pictures" because she trusted me to share our "pictures" together. But this time was different than other times I visited her classroom.

This time I came with a new role, "a researcher," who asked her to share our "pictures" in public. I was a person who would tell about our "pictures," our stories. Carol was conscious that I came to her classroom this time not only as a friend who had a "camera" in my hands but also as a researcher, a stranger who wanted to take "pictures" and to share the "pictures" in public among other strangers. "How can she trust a stranger to be in her classroom?" As I put myself in her shoes, I began to see the dilemma Carol had to deal with as I invited her to be part of my research. As a friend and researcher, I hoped the research would help Carol see better ways to live with her teaching dilemmas. But unconsciously, I, as her friend and a researcher, brought the dilemma to her life before our research adventure began. "How can she refuse me because I'm her friend? How can she trust me because I'm a researcher, a stranger in her classroom? As a stranger, what 'pictures' am I going to take and how am I going to talk about them? Do I understand the 'pictures' well enough to tell the stories behind the 'pictures' in public?" Carol might think about her dilemma over and over before she agreed to be part of my study.

Later, in one of our conversations, I asked Carol, "Does it take you a lot of courage to be involved in the research?" She expressed her feeling of having me in her classroom,

> Yes, you know, it does. Even though---yes---it does because---um---there's been probably half a dozen times since the time you asked me. I hope I'm ready for this (the research) (laugh). **(Conversation; January 14, 1992, p. 19)**

As we went through our research together, our relationship was more like friendship than anything else. From talking to each other, Carol began to reaffirm her trust in me to be a person who told the stories about our "pictures" in public (Noddings, 1991). Carol always introduced me to her colleagues by saying, "She (Nophanet) is a good friend of mine from the university." As we journeyed together, we reaffirmed a shared trust. To "trust" in our sense meant, as Belenky and her colleagues wrote, "not just to tolerate a variety of viewpoints, acting as an impartial referee, assuring equal air time to all. It means to try to connect, to enter into each (person's) perspective" (p. 227). In our work, both Carol and I tried to imagine each other's perspectives. We shared our professional and personal stories. I felt closer to Carol than before. Many times we told stories of our past experiences together in the Preprimary Program. She told me some of the stories of children we both knew before. At one time Carol shared a story from before she decided to be part of the research. She said,

> I remember going out for supper with Margaret and Sheila, and Brenda before Christmas and we were talking about the things we're going to be doing and how stressful and everything, like everything, was very stressful before Christmas. And I said, "Guess what? In January, Nophanet is coming to my classroom." "Oh! what's she going to be doing?" "Well, research." I said, "I hope I'm ready." (laugh) **(Conversation; January 14, 1992, p. 20)**

Carol continued her conversation, "But no, I feel relaxed when you are there. I really do. So, it's working out really good, Nophanet" (**Conversation; January 14, 1992, p. 20**).

As a new researcher, I was always concerned about my relationships with the two teachers, especially my relationship with Carol. We had known each other for a long time. We talked about her educational philosophy, classroom practices, and children's stories. As I reflected on my relationship with Carol, I realized that I brought my perspectives about her as a person and a teacher with me to her classroom which affected my relationship with her. To me, Carol was a spiritual, sensitive, philosophical, and caring person. She was thoughtful and always reflected on her action with the children and her philosophy of education. She had high expectations of herself as a teacher. Every time I was with Carol, I felt she put ninety-nine percent of her energy into her teaching. Because of the story I had already constructed of Carol, I felt I interacted with her and constructed her stories in a different way from my work with Michael. We were women and sometimes I realized I was more careful about my actions with women than men. I could touch their feelings differently. As Carol tried to develop trust and caring among her students, we, as two adults, tried to develop trust and caring between each other. There were a lot of moments that I told Carol about my personal experiences and my concerns about my work and the research. At the beginning of my study, I had no idea of what I was doing. I was confused and did not know how I would put our research stories into writing. When I mentioned my concern to Carol, she said, "Don't worry. You will. (laugh) You will" (**Conversation; January 14, 1992**). As a friend, Carol always encouraged me in my research. She sometimes talked about her own research process to make me feel comfortable and confident.

At first, I was worried about the way I used a tape-recorder in our conversations. This concern began to be a dilemma for me as I reflected on my action during one of our conversations. On that day I began to ask myself, "What is my purpose in this research? Why do I need to keep every conversation on a tape-recorder? What is the purpose of using a tape-recorder? Am I going to listen to Carol more if I don't use a tape-recorder?" In a journal entry, I reflected,

> Today I did not feel good about myself. I began to realize that when I used a tape-recorder, I was too worried about it. I was afraid that I might run out of battery. I was aware that I was very concerned about this stuff and it sometimes made me pay less attention to what Carol said at the beginning of our conversation. However, when I realized about my feeling, I tried not to concern myself about the tape-recorder anymore. I began to ask myself, "What is my purpose of doing this research? Why do I need to keep every conversation on a tape-recorder? What is the purpose of using a tape-recorder?" As I reflected on my action this morning, I felt that if the tape-recorder made me worried, I should not use it anymore. I did not know why I was concerned about quoting the participant's direct words into our research. I believed I needed to listen by my heart more than anything else. The teachers' stories always integrated with my stories and became our research stories. To me, the most important thing in doing a

> research was the relationship between my teachers and me. **(Journal; January 21, 1992)**

The more I reflected on using the tape-recorder, the more I realized it was a dilemma for me. I also wondered if it was a dilemma for Carol. I dealt with my dilemma by talking to Carol. At the next meeting before I recorded the conversation, I decided to ask Carol about how she felt about me using the tape-recorder. Carol said, "It's O.K." (**Conversation; January 27, 1992**). However, she found herself thinking more about what she was saying. Carol also felt that she evaluated her actions at the same time. Carol articulated,

> I find myself---um---thinking about what I'm saying, evaluating it. Is that really where I should---yeah---more careful. **(Conversation; January 27, 1992, p. 3)**

Carol encouraged me to see the importance and necessity of recording our conversations. She said,

> I know---but you see---you have to use it because how well are you going to remember everything. I mean, when you talk back and forth conversation, your mind is going. Your ideas are going and to sit down and write something down even a word or two to remind you of the conversation, you miss the phrase or you miss an incident. So, you have to have that. It's got to be there otherwise you would always be---the pressure on you to remember would be overwhelming and you would miss more than us being careful in the conversation. I mean I think for a reliability point of view. **(Conversation; January 27, 1992, p. 3)**

Later when I had an opportunity to participate in a mini-research project and was interviewed by a good friend, I got insight into what Carol said about being careful about what she was saying. I also found myself being careful about what I was saying. In my journal entry that day, I related my story to Carol's story. I recorded,

> Today Helen interviewed me for her ethnography paper. She also recorded our conversations. I felt a little bit strange when she interviewed me. It was different from when she usually talked to me. She kept asking me a lot of questions. She used the "Why" questions a lot. I realized

> that I was more careful when I talked to her because I knew that she was going to write about our conversations in her paper. I could understand how Carol felt when I interviewed her. It was not easy to be a participant in a research. It kept me awake all the time. I had to think more about the question "Why?" "Why am I here?" **(Journal; February 6, 1992)**

Carol also shared her personal feelings with me. We tried to be open to each other as much as we could. At the same time we learned to respect each other as people. We shared with each other about where and how we felt safe to share our stories, our word pictures. Both Carol and I felt that when we moved to a new place, we were very frustrated at first. We felt insecure and tried to figure out the new context so we could feel safe. We both agreed we needed time to find out whether a new place was a safe place for us to share our stories and express our feelings. Carol articulated,

> I find, you know, like when I'm in a place and I know the people and I feel comfortable. I trust them and secure in my role. Then you have a higher degree of self-confidence so you're freer in doing things. I know that every time I've changed jobs I am quiet---quiet for a long time. I'll watch people. I learn. I think. I get to feel for what's going on and then I can gradually join in and participate more, you know. **(Conversation; April 15, 1992, p. 17)**

As I reflected in my journal entries, I focused my observations more on Carol as a teacher than on her students. I was very concerned about her feelings during the day. It might be because I had previously seen Carol teaching in the Preprimary Program. I was also aware of the environment and how successful she was in the Preprimary Program. Many times I felt I still lived with Carol's past experiences in the Preprimary Program. Carol adapted herself better than I did and reminded me of where we were at the moment. Carol said,

> I don't think back to the Preprimary Program anymore when I'm doing my teaching. I don't---it's just like that was then and there and this is where I am now. Like I used to---I think last year when I was in grade one, I used to, "Gee! you know, we did this and it was so good! Gee! we did that." I was looking in my memory without saying,

> "Here's where we are, now." **(Conversation; March 25, 1992, p. 11)**

The more I reflected, the more I realized I developed many roles in my relationship with Carol. There were many moments that I saw Carol as my master teacher, my elder, somebody from whom I learned a lot about what teaching and learning should be in the classroom. Carol was my "ideal" teacher. From her teaching practice, she demonstrated for me what a good teacher was. In one of my journal entries, I reflected,

> It was beautiful when Carol tried to learn other languages from her children. It showed that the children could become our teachers as well. Also, Carol gave the children opportunities to be powerful in their classroom. Some children who could not control English well enough could count in their mother tongues. Carol showed the children that it was O.K. to be different and we learned a lot from the difference. When she asked the children to count in different languages, she taught them a lot of things. It was more than the language itself. She helped them develop positive attitudes about themselves, where they came from, and who they were. She helped her children appreciate their own background and respect themselves. I believe that if the children learned to respect themselves, they learned to respect other people as well. **(Journal; January 14, 1992)**

The first time I asked Carol to reflect on some of our stories, I was surprised that Carol changed some of her words. It was a dilemma for me. It made me think, to go back to our stories and to re-listen to our conversations again and again in order to figure out how to manage the dilemma. I began to realize for the first time that both Carol and I are human beings who construct and re-construct our stories all the time (Clandinin, 1992). Our stories of our lives had not stopped. They were going on and changing all the time as we tried to live and relive our stories. We were forever in process, forever growing and reconstructing our experiences. We were forever in pursuit of ourselves (Dewey, 1916). I also realized that Carol had different interpretations of her teaching stories at different times and in different contexts which led me to be aware that we, as human beings, had different ways of telling the same stories to different people. Our way of looking and interpreting things changed depending upon the circumstances and time (Belenky et al, 1986). As I wrote this chapter, I realized the stories I asked Carol to reflect on from that day were already her past experiences. As Carol daily lived her life story, the time and the context changed. And also it changed the way Carol looked at her stories. Coles (1989) in the The Call of Stories noted something similar when some of his students commented upon how a few years of life and a different intellectual agenda affected their response to a particular story. In one of our conversations, I shared the story of my dilemma with Carol. She responded,

> It wouldn't matter if you were here everyday for the whole day because every time I leave the school and go home, some experience would have altered my thinking somehow. It would have affected me. **(Conversation; April 29, 1992, p. 7)**

As I reflected more on our research stories, I realized that if another researcher came into the two teachers' classrooms, a different study would emerge depending upon who the researcher was and depending upon his/her relationship with the teachers. This reminded me of Schutz (1953) who wrote,

> Not only what an individual knows differs from what his neighbor knows, but also how both know the "same" facts. (p. 14)

Schutz drew my attention to the importance of who we were in connection with the world. As human beings, each of us had her own ways of interpreting things around us. We constructed knowledge from our past experiences and from our interactions to the world.

As I reflected on my relationship with Carol, I remembered one of the hardest times on our journey. It was when one of the boys in Carol's school committed suicide. That morning the first thing Carol told me was she did not feel good because one of the grade six students with whom she worked in the afternoon had committed suicide. As I listened to her, I was totally shocked and silenced. I could not think of any words with which to console her. While Carol was teaching that morning, I did not pay much attention to what she was doing. The fact that a young boy was dead came to mind again and again. I began to think about life, death, and the uncertainty of life. "Was the boy too young to die? Does death have anything to do with time? And what about me? What am I doing? Where am I going? When am I going to die? Am I going to die soon?" At that moment I felt as if the whole of my life was a dream, as if there was no "reality" in life. Death was a moment of awakening and coming into another dream, a new dream.

As I constructed and re-constructed the story of the day of the boy's death, I wondered why his death stuck in my mind for such a long time. I reflected over and over on his death. As I retold this story in my writing, I could connect my past experiences to the death of the boy. I began to realize why his death had a powerful meaning for me.

I was sixteen when one of my friends committed suicide. As a teenager, I was shocked when I heard the news. To me, her death seemed to be "unreal." It was something I had not realized before. After her funeral, I was still thinking over and over about her death. As I told the story to my father, I asked him, "Why did she decide to commit suicide? Why did she have to die? Why her? How come young people die early?" During that time I did not expect people in my generation to die early. I always thought that old people died first. Different from usual, this time my father did not explain anything. He just asked me, "What makes you think old people are supposed to die before young people? Who told you that?" My father's questions helped me to cope with the death of my friend. I could suppress my teenager's dilemma of death underneath the surface and went on with my life. But when I experienced the death of the boy in Carol's school, my dilemma of death again began to surface. This time I was a grown-up woman, not a teenager. How would I deal with this dilemma?

Later, in a conversation that day, both Carol and I reflected on a lot of things about life and death. Carol reflected again and again on her relationship with the boy and how she tried to help the boy's best friend cope with the feeling of loss. As I listened to Carol's story, I was aware that Carol was trying to cope with her feelings of loss at the same time that she tried to help her student. She saw herself in the child. She saw her story within his story. The way she tried to help the boy was the way she tried to deal with herself, her own feeling of loss. The boy's dilemma was also her dilemma. The way she cared about him was the way she cared about herself. In our conversation, Carol reflected,

> One of his best friends is another boy that I see in the afternoon, Alex. Alex---when he's talked with me on Monday, his hand's in his pocket and he's fiddling with something in his pocket over and over again. He just couldn't leave that alone. Finally, I said, "Alex, what is that? What do you have in your pocket?" And he brought it out and it was a piece of crystal--um--quartz. And he said, "I brought this to school today. I was going to show Richard but he wasn't here." And the tears just started to roll and I knew his pain and so I hugged him and let him cry and then we talked about how we can keep this crystal special because it's going to be associated with the memory of Richard. So, I crocheted him a little---rainbow doily like a small one, like this, so he could put it on in a special place and we're going to work on a memory book. **(Conversation; March 4, 1992, p. 8)**

In the same way that I listened to Carol's story, I listened to myself. That day I could see myself in her situation better than on the other days. I saw my pain through her story. Everything I told her was what I wanted to confirm for myself about an unexpected situation that came to our lives. Again Carol's dilemma was my dilemma. In our conversation I reflected,

> He was very young and that's what you connected with. And most of us didn't expect that young people could die but death comes at anytime, with anybody, and in different ways both old and young. **(Conversation; March 4, 1992, p. 10)**

As I reflected on our conversation that day, it reminded me of my father's words when he told me not to take life for granted. As his daughter, I had taken life for granted. I was a person who lived my life "immersed, as it were, in daily life, in the mechanical round of habitual activities" (Greene, 1978a, p. 42). Every time my father tried to talk to me about an awareness of life and the uncertainty of life, I hardly listened to him. As he began his conversations, his words were like the wind that blew past my ears. They meant nothing to me. I could not make a connection between his story and my story. I had not really listened to what he tried to tell me. I led my life on the edge and never really thought about what life was. I had not asked myself what I had done with my own life. Now, away from my father, I could listen to his words better and begin to make connections between his story and my story. I could hear his words more now than when I was with him. It seemed like he was sitting next to me and was again telling me about life. Every single word of his was in me and I heard it over and over. Some of them began to make sense to me. I felt like a child who awakened from a long nap. I began to see life in a new way and to appreciate life more. I realized life was precious not because it was perfectible but because I could reflect on my past experiences and enhance my present experiences. As I lived my life, I could continue to create new things that I had not created before. I could do the impossible (Cousins, 1981). In one of my journal entries, I reflected,

> I thought that sometimes when something that was unexpected happened in our lives, it made us stop and think about what happened. In trying to make sense of the unexpected situation, we begin to see the world with new eyes, the eyes that we never used before. The death of a boy in Carol's school made me see life with my stranger's eyes. I began to see life as an uncertainty and looked at it with wonder and amazement. I began to be aware of my life and realized that for some people, life was very short. I started to appreciate the life I was living and the people I came to work with. **(Journal; March 8, 1992)**

As I constructed and reconstructed the story about my father, I began to see that my father tried to tell me the same thing that he was trying to tell himself. The story of life and death might be a dilemma that my father had learned to live with all of his professional life and it became a part of his every day life. I was quite sure that my father experienced the death of his patients. I could imagine how painful it was for him when his patients passed away. It might be a terrible pain for him and he would have faced it over and over. Even though he wished he could avoid it, he could not. How could he deal with this dilemma? As I constructed and reconstructed our stories, I began to see the way in which my father tried to cope with his dilemma. By telling and retelling me to be aware of the uncertainty of life, my father learned to cope with his dilemma. The story he tried to tell me was the story that he tried to tell himself. He reflected on his story again and again in order to understand it. As a doctor, he might be luckier than me for the dilemma he experienced in his every day life was a part of the life of everybody. It was a life dilemma. Perhaps he could prepare himself better than me, his daughter.

The more I reflected on the story of life and death, the more I realized that it was an ongoing dilemma for both Carol and me as human beings and as teachers. As a teacher, even though I was aware that we could not avoid death, I did not want my students to die before me. Carol's dilemma of death became my dilemma as I listened to her stories. This dilemma stayed with me all the time as I worked with Carol. I tried to deal with it by telling myself not to think about it so it would not bother me as much. At the same time I learned that I couldn't get it away from thinking about death. It kept coming back to my mind as I experienced life. It seemed to be my dilemma of life. Some days it was worse than others and I had to cope with it by reflecting again and again on the uncertainty of life and on what life was. I told and retold stories of the dilemma in order to manage it. This dilemma really affected me as a person and as a researcher. After listening to the story about the boy's death that day, I did not see life the same again and that affected the way I constructed and reconstructed our research stories. Needleman (1982) informed me that philosophy for the eastern world began in "the experience of suffering, in the encounter with death and human finitude" (p. 196). If my thinking and reflecting on life and death were considered to be "the experience of suffering," it seemed I was doing philosophy on my life.

During our research journey, there were times when I felt Carol was depressed. A week after the death of the boy, Carol looked tired (**Fieldnotes; March 11, 1992**). When she was teaching that morning, Carol expressed her feelings to the children by relating it to the story she had read to them. In my fieldnotes, I recorded,

> Carol asked Scott to select a storybook about bears for her to read to the children. Scott chose A Lazy Bear for his teacher to read. When Carol saw the title of the story, she said, "That's what Mrs. Rawlings feels like today---a lazy bear." (**Fieldnotes; March 11, 1992**)

Later in our conversation, Carol told me she was tired and still upset about the event the week before (**Fieldnotes; March 11, 1992**). As I came home that day, I thought a lot about Carol. I was worried that she felt down. I began to question myself wondering whether my presence interrupted the continuity of her teaching. Perhaps I was an added burden in Carol's life. However, as I reflected, I began to be aware of the dilemma I created for myself. I could see how Carol's dilemmas became my dilemmas. I realized that as we worked together, we affected each other. I began to be aware of how Carol affected me as a person, a teacher, and a researcher. I began to wonder how I affected her life. In one of our conversations, Carol talked about her feeling of having other people in the classroom. She said,

> People really affect me a lot that are in the room because I'm very empathetic. I can feel what the other person is feeling and it affects me. I can't distance it like if I could distance it, I may not relate so well for the children, where they are coming from. (**Conversation; April 22, 1992, p. 22**)

In one of my journal entries, I reflected on my feeling. I wrote,

> I was worried about Carol. I wanted her to be happy. I was not sure whether Carol still wanted to work with me or not. However, it was very interesting to see how her dilemmas became my dilemmas. I began to realize that when two people worked together, they always affected each other. Look how much Carol affected me. In the same way, I wanted to know how much I affected her. I was aware that I was upset and didn't want to work on my fieldnotes. I was scared and hesitated because I was not sure about the direction I was heading. I tried to figure out how Carol felt about my being in her classroom, her world of teaching. At the same time, I began to realize that all of my wonderings and bewilderment made my journey more interesting. It made me keep going on the research. I thought if I knew all the way through, the research would not be interesting anymore. It would make my life boring. From wondering, I learned a lot. Working with Carol helped me reflect on my feeling and myself. I began to see life as dilemmas. Even though I got frustrated from my own dilemmas, I was aware that I learned a lot from thinking about dilemmas. **(Journal; March 13, 1992)**

This time I could not solve my dilemma but I did manage it by reflecting on it. As I reflected on Carol and myself, I was aware again that teaching reflected life. Teaching was the same as life. Sometimes teaching could be frustrating, uncertain, unpredictable, and full of dilemmas. On the other hand, teaching was full of moments of wonder and joy. As teachers, we needed to realize both sides of teaching, both sides of life. For us to come in touch with ourselves, to realize what we were doing and what teaching was, we had to come to exist in a kind of tension (Greene, 1978b). In my journal entries, I wrote,

> I began to realize more and more that teaching was a busy job and sometimes it was frustrating and full of dilemmas. At the same time, teaching was full of joy and excitement. As teachers, we needed to realize both sides of teaching. **(Journal; March 13, 1992)**

As I worked on this chapter, I realized that as a researcher I could not separate thought from feeling (Bateson, 1984). I could not separate myself from Carol. My observations did not preclude my involvement. As I observed Carol in her classroom, I put myself in her situation. I was aware that as we worked together, we influenced each other. We both brought our stories and ourselves into our research. Bateson (1984) reminded me that there was no clear line between objectivity and subjectivity in our research. She wrote,

> Trying to be objective, you may think you are separating off an experience by setting it in a frame, but actually the frame changes the meaning of what is within it (p. 172).

As I worked with Carol, there were moments when I was angry at myself because I felt I evaluated Carol's action by the way I talked. Sometimes I used words like, "You are a good teacher." As I reflected on my interviews with Carol, the more I felt I evaluated her. It became a "big" dilemma for me. As a researcher, I was aware I was there not to evaluate the teachers but to listen to their stories, to try to understand them and to learn from them. Rajneesh (1977) reminded me that as human beings, our minds were eager to judge, to say good or bad, right or wrong. The moment I judged, I closed myself to the possibility for growth. My sensitivity was lost. As I reflected again and again on my words, I wondered what Carol would think of them. When I met Carol the next time, I asked her how she felt about my coming into her classroom and about the way I talked. Carol reflected,

> I think---I don't---maybe the words say that, that ---it was an evaluation type of thing but I didn't feel like that. When you said that, it was a reassurance. It was a friendly comment. It wasn't---I didn't take it as an evaluative comment at all. **(Conversation; April 15, 1992, p. 12)**

After talking to Carol on that day, I felt better about myself. I could see the way I dealt with the dilemma. I handled it by talking to Carol in order to know how she felt about my words. At the same time I realized that we, as human beings, were different and each of us had her own way of constructing the world. What I thought was an evaluation might not be what Carol thought. The way to look at things was from the eye of the beholder. Each of us interpreted the world from a particular standpoint, a particular location in space and time (Greene, 1978b). As I reflected on the story, it reminded me of Campbell (1991). He wrote,

> Life is without meaning
> You bring the meaning to it (p. 16).

Campbell (1991) drew my attention to the importance of continually questioning my "truth." My conversations with Carol were important not as a criterion for what was right or good, but as a sign of mutual understanding that we were questioning our practices and beliefs about what teaching and learning should be. I learned it was better for two people who worked together to be open and honest with each other because what one perceived might not be what the other perceived.

From the beginning of my research journey with the two teachers, I was concerned and asked myself again and again, "Is the research useful for the teachers?" If it was not useful for them, "What should I do?" "Should I continue the research? If I decided to quit, what should I do next? How can I graduate without doing research?" This was an ongoing dilemma throughout my inquiry. The dilemma originated in my thought and occasionally disrupted the rhythm of my journey. As I reflected on my research stories, I realized I did not resolve the dilemma, but I managed it by keeping it underneath the surface so that I could go on with the study.

This dilemma came more frequently to my mind as I worked with Carol. To me, Carol was a "perfect" teacher and, when I looked at her children, I realized they were fine without me helping in the classroom. I felt Carol did not need extra help from me. As the research went on, I sometimes worried about being in her classroom. Having grown up in another culture in another part of the world, I realized I could not take the "classroom world" for granted. I did not know the culture of the schools in North America well enough. As I worked with Carol, I questioned myself, "Do I interrupt her teaching and the lives of the children?" When I got involved with the children during their play time, I was aware of how I talked to them. "Did I interrupt their play, their learning?" As a kindergarten teacher, I respected the children and did not want to interrupt the continuity of their learning. In one of our conversations, Carol confirmed my presence in her classroom. She said,

> You are very sensitive. You are very caring. You are always so polite to me and respectful that I have no problems anytime you are in my classroom. I feel wonderful when you are around. I trust you. I feel safe and probably I don't feel that with all of the people so with Gerry when he comes in like I know you are sensitive with your space, where you sit, how you move, you know, how you interact with the kids or talk with them. You are very sensitive and I really appreciate that. That's what I think observation should be if you are visiting the classroom. What you have done is ideal. **(Conversation; April 22, 1992, p. 23)**

There were some moments I felt I did not help Carol as much. I came to her classroom to be a part of her life and to listen to her stories. I was concerned that the research might not be as useful for her as it was for me. I asked myself, "Does my being in Carol's classroom help her to manage her teaching dilemmas? Does it help her with her teaching? Did I push her too hard in our conversations?" As time went by, my concern became a dilemma for me. I learned a lot from Carol but I might not give her anything. As a researcher, I believed good research should be useful for both the teachers and the researcher. The dilemma made me reflect again and again. I could not resolve it but I tried to manage my dilemma by asking Carol how she felt about my being in her classroom. Even though Carol confirmed I was very useful for her, the dilemma was still in my mind. When Carol planned to introduce a multi-cultural theme to the class, I volunteered to talk to the children about my country in order to feel more useful. I also wanted to get insight into how Carol felt when another person observed her in the classroom. As I reflected on the situation, I realized that my role changed from a researcher to a teacher. I began to see the children through the eyes of the teacher. I also began to realize how important it was for me to have somebody with me to help me reflect on my teaching. In my journal entry that day, I recorded,

> Today was the first day I did not take any notes because I did not have time to write anything down. I felt really good because I felt that I interacted with the children more. I acted more like a teacher today. My role changed from being a researcher to a teacher. I saw the children from the eyes of the teacher for the first time when I sat on a rocking chair in the book area and talked to them about Thailand. I also found it was hard for me to take notes when I was both teacher and researcher. I could not see myself while I was teaching. Even now when I had to reflect on my teaching, I felt it was harder than when I looked at myself through the teachers' stories. I could not see myself clearly enough in my teaching. Maybe I get used to myself so I couldn't see anything different when I reflected on it. I found that I could see the main ideas but I couldn't get into the details. It was hard to see the details in ourselves. Maybe that's why I need to look at my stories through the teachers' stories. (**Journal; February 11, 1992**)

In my last meeting with Carol at her school, I asked her to reflect on my being in her classroom. Carol felt we were together in the classroom. I was not apart from her. She said,

> I can't talk to my husband about what I've done the same way because he's not part of this classroom, because you shared this and journeyed with me. I count you as a valid source to reflect on myself through to what you're saying, through what you saw, through what you comment. It mirrors, you know, like one little baby are---young children do something. You always try to show them how beautiful or wonderful it was so that they grow more and that's the experience you've given to me. You've been the mirror that's framing the positive things about me and helping me to grow to new levels. (**Conversation; June 3, 1992, p. 6**)

As I described my relationship with Carol both in the field texts and in the research texts, I realized that as a researcher and a person I brought my own personal stories and expectations with me, and they framed the way I constructed and reconstructed her stories. The moments I observed Carol were moments of my participation. I could not separate myself from the research. The questions I asked during our conversations shaped her answers. I was also aware that my telling and retelling Carol's story was different from others telling and retelling her stories. In her book With a Daughter's Eye, Mary Catherine Bateson's (1984) description of her father, anthropologist Gregory Bateson, helped me think about my involvement in the research. He told her, "You can't work with human beings without allowing for your own involvement" (p. 172).

As a researcher, it was important for me not to ignore or overlook or throw out my own personal stories of working with Carol but to take them into account as data to study and acknowledge. As Belenky and her colleagues (1986) reminded us, the personal and the professional became the same thing when we were careful not to separate ourselves from the study. Bateson (1984) in With a Daughter's Eye wrote,

> These resonances between the personal and the professional are the source of both insight and error. You avoid mistakes and distortions not so much by trying to build a wall between the observer and the observed as by observing the observer-observing yourself-as well, and bringing the personal issues into consciousness. (p. 161)

Bateson (1984) drew our attention to the importance of looking into ourselves at the same time as we were studying other people's lives. I needed to realize my personal stories affected the way I observed and interpreted other people's stories. Therefore, in order to understand Michael's and Carol's stories, it is important for readers to realize the relationships between Carol and me and Michael and me which made our stories unique.

My Relationship with Michael

Michael came into my life first as a co-instructor of a summer class. He appeared to me as a young energetic teacher, open and honest in the way he talked about things. I learned that Michael was strong and open-minded. From our class journals, I also learned Michael was a reflective and articulate teacher. When I first went to Michael's classroom, I felt very comfortable. Michael was relaxed in his teaching as was Laura, his teacher assistant. The children in the classroom adapted very well to me, a stranger. They approached me as if we had known each other for a long time. On my first visit to their classroom, one of the girls came to me and showed me the bandage on her hand. When I asked her name, she asked me if I wanted her to write it down. After she wrote it, she and her friends invited me to be a part of their play. In my fieldnotes, I recorded,

> I went to observe the children in a role-play area. At first there were two girls playing together. They were playing "Mom." Both of them had their own "babies" and they held the "babies" in their arms and fed them. When one of the girls saw me, she came to me and showed her bandage on one of her hands. I asked her if it hurt. The girl said, "No." When I asked her about her name, the girl asked me if I wanted her to write it down. I said, "Sure." The girl wrote her name down. Her name is "Christie." After that a boy came to ask me whether I wanted "a cup of coffee." I said, "O.K.," he brought me "a cup of coffee." I asked for "sugar" and "cream." The boy and Christie brought them for me. After that another girl asked me to hold her "baby" for her. I needed to take care of the "baby." **(Fieldnotes; January 8, 1992, p. 4-5)**

A little boy came to me and said, "Excuse me, I'm making a Christmas tree for you to hang up in the class" (**Fieldnotes; January 8, 1992, p. 5**). It seemed to me the children invited me to be a part of their school lives from the first day. They were interested in reading and writing. They looked at my fieldnotes (**January 8, 1992, p. 8**) and tried to figure out what I was writing. Some of them came to me and said, "What are you writing? Could you please read it to me?"

Before I left the school on the second day of my visits, Michael said he appreciated my being in his classroom. Michael said he needed someone to ask him about his teaching. Why did he do that? Why did he do this? He said it made him think about his teaching and how he could improve his teaching. Michael also said that teachers should have somebody come in to their classrooms so they could learn about their teaching. I was happy because I was concerned about whether I might interrupt the rhythm of his teaching. I felt more relaxed about being there (**Journal; January 10, 1992**). From time to time, Michael mentioned it was nice for him and the children to have people visit their classroom because the children had more adults with whom to interact. In one of our interviews, Michael said,

> I tell you it was nice having three people in there (the classroom) too. I had a parent in yesterday as well. It's always nice. The more adults for children to interact with, the better it is. (**Interview; January 29, 1992, p. 7**)

During the first month that I worked with Michael, I had a feeling his teaching was similar to my teaching. The more I looked at him, the more I saw my story within his story. Michael's teaching reminded me of my first year of teaching, of being fresh, enthusiastic and active about my teaching. That year I felt like a child who looked at things around me with wonder and inquiry. That year I was least worried about other people's voices. That year I listened most to my voice and to what I believed about teaching and learning. And best of all, it was during my first year of teaching that I loved teaching most. In one of my journal entries, I reflected,

> Every time I thought about Michael, he reminded me a lot of my first year of teaching. Michael looked very happy with the children. Everything seemed to be wonderful for him. It was very similar to my first year of teaching. When I first began my teaching, everything was bright to me. I did not see any problems about my teaching. The world looked wonderful for me. I loved the children. They were cute and curious. I let them do whatever they wanted to do as long as they did not hurt other people. I remember I had a lot of energy to teach. To me, Michael looked very happy with his work. I wondered, "Are there any problems that Michael is concerned with?" (**Journal; January 28, 1992**)

After I talked to Michael, I found he also had dilemmas to deal with in his teaching. But because Michael was an optimistic person, he could look at things with his positive eyes. In one of our conversations, Michael said,

> There are so many things that I want to do but---I don't have to do them now. (laugh) I have a whole life time ahead of me. **(Interview; March 24, 1992, p. 8)**

During the first two months of my study, I was concerned because I focused more on Carol's stories than on Michael's stories. I was quite worried because when I reflected on my journal entries at the end of the second month of my study, I found that I had written most of them about Carol. I was aware that I was working with two teachers, but I did not understand why I talked and thought more about Carol. I felt I knew Carol and her classroom life more fully than Michael's. I could see her dilemmas and how she tried to cope with them. Carol talked to me of her dilemmas. With Michael, I felt as if I was walking in a dark, damp cave. I did not know where I was going. I could not see the light. I was in a state of confusion. I could not see any of his dilemmas. I remember the day we talked about the research study and Michael mentioned that we needed to find some of his dilemmas. Because I focused more on Carol's stories than on Michael's, it created another dilemma for me as a researcher. During the first two months, I tried to tell myself I was still adapting to the process of doing research, that is learning to write fieldnotes, transcribing conversations, and so on. Michael's voice was soft and he spoke quickly. It was hard for me to transcribe our conversations. I tried to put my dilemma underneath the surface so that I would not feel guilty and could go on with my research. I tried to ignore it. At the same time, I realized I needed to focus more on Michael's stories. In one of my journal entries, I expressed my feeling,

> I felt that during the last two months, I focused more on Carol's stories than on Michael's stories. Therefore, from now on I would focus more on Michael's stories. I found that it was hard to work with two teachers at the same time. It kept me busy all the time. It seemed to me that during

> this time I had a lot of stories about Carol, more than about Michael. I thought I should focus my attention to Michael more especially on our conversations because sometimes they were hard for me to transcribe. I felt his voice was soft and he spoke fast. **(Journal; March 2, 1992)**

I tried to solve my dilemma of transcribing my conversations with Michael by using a small, more powerful, microphone with him. While the microphone helped in transcribing our conversations, it did not help solve my dilemma. As I went on with the study, I was still bewildered. How could I write Michael's stories? Even though I began to see some of his dilemmas, I still did not see how to put them in writing. As I looked through my stories with Michael, I knew that they were all over the place. I had stories about his children, about his teacher assistant, about my dilemma, and about him. How could I pull them together? I had no idea. I felt as if I was lost in a forest and could not find a way out. I tried to enjoy all the trees, flowers, and butterflies around me.

As I constructed and re-constructed my dilemma with Michael, I began to look into myself and to try to figure out why, during the first two months, I focused more on Carol's stories than on his stories. The closer I looked into myself, the more I was aware of my relationship with him during those first two months. At the beginning of the study our relationship was more like a researcher/teacher relationship than a relationship between friends. Even though I had known him for two months before I began my research, I did not feel I knew him well. I tried to figure out who he was so that I could know him better. Because English was my second language, I had to adjust to his voice and his style of talking. I had to figure out the classroom routines and to get to know the children. To me, everything was new and wonderful. Michael did not seem to have dilemmas at all, but when I got to know him better, we began to talk about his dilemmas as a teacher.

As I retold our stories, it reminded me of a story I heard a long time ago from a good friend of mine. The story was about a young gentleman who wanted to know about life after death. The man really wanted to know what hell was like and what heaven was like. He began to search for their meanings by reading books about hell and heaven. He talked to a lot of people who said they had experienced life after death. From his inquiry, the man could imagine what heaven was like, but not what hell was like. Then it came to a day when the young man was very sick. As he lay half-awake and half-asleep in a hospital, he saw a big and cruel man in black clothes walking toward him. The big man asked him to get up. The young man was very scared and did not want to get up, but he could not do anything except to get up and to follow the big man. He found out later the big man was a "guard" whose duty was to take dead people to another world, the world after death. The guard took the young man to see a "beautiful" man with a sad face. Later he found out the man was a "mediator," a person who was between good and bad and acted as a judge. When the mediator saw the man he realized the guard had taken the wrong person. The young man was not supposed to die during this time. However, the "mediator" gave the man an opportunity to pick a place he wanted to visit. The man thought about heaven first but since he had read many books about heaven and could imagine what heaven was like, he asked to visit hell. To him, even though he had read books about hell, it was hard to imagine what hell was like. The mediator took him to hell. The man was very surprised at what he saw. He felt like he was in a big party with music, there were a lot of presents on a huge table, people gambling, and people singing and dancing. All of them looked very happy. They seemed to have good lives. After the guard took him back to earth, the man recovered from his sickness and lived a happy life. He did not search for life after death anymore. Instead, he was looking forward to death. Days became months. Months became seasons. Seasons became years and years became more years. Children became adults and the young man became the old man. Then came the day the man actually died. When the guard took him to see the mediator, the mediator asked him the same question, "Where do you want to go, hell or heaven?" With confidence, the man said, "Hell. I want to go to hell." The mediator took him to hell.

The man was shocked by what he saw. He heard people crying in pain and the noise never seemed to stop. It hurt his ears. Men and women carried things on their backs like donkeys. A huge pan in which to boil people who stopped working was on a nearby fire. Some people had to climb high trees with prickles all over them. Some men were in chains. The man felt desperate at what he saw and asked the mediator, "How come hell changed from the first time I saw it?" The mediator said, "The first time you came as a tourist but this time you came as a resident."

During my first two months in Michael's classroom, I felt like a tourist, a stranger who came to visit a beautiful country, a country that was not "home." Even though I used my stranger's eyes to look at things around me, I was aware I saw only the surface of the country, the beautiful things that came to my sight. To be a stranger, a tourist in a new country was different from being a resident who returned home after a long stay in another place. As a tourist, I did not know the country well enough to realize the problems of the new country. As time passed, I became more like a resident who used a stranger's eyes to inquire into the world around me. I came to know Michael more as a teacher and a person. I was with his children more and could get insight into their lives. I felt like a resident who was beginning to be aware of the dilemmas of the country but still did not know how to live with them. I went on with my journey in confusion.

My relationship with Michael became more like one of friends as we worked together more and more. To me, Michael was a "real" friend. We are almost the same age, something that made me feel relaxed and straightforward in my relationship with him. Each morning when I went to Michael's classroom, I felt relaxed. Michael often made me feel comfortable by asking me to help in classroom activities. He made me feel more like a partner than a stranger. My relationship with him was open and honest. Some mornings Michael told me he was tired. Some days I told him I was tired. To me, Michael was not a "perfect" teacher. He was more like a "real" teacher, the same as me.

As I worked and talked with him, we both knew some days were worse than other days. But as teachers, we knew we could get through them. Michael expressed himself,

> I know there's going to be tough days. And so I don't get down over them. I go home and I say, "Oh! well, so, we had a tough day. What can we do to make it better?" **(Interview; March 24, 1992, p. 6)**

In writing this chapter, I began to see that my relationship with Michael was quite a dilemma for me. Even though I felt comfortable and open with him, there were a lot of questions I did not ask him because I did not know what he would think of them. For example, I did not keep asking him, as I had Carol, how he felt about my being in his classroom. After I talked to him once or twice about my presence, I stopped. As I was writing, I realized there were many possibilities that might affect our relationships. It might be because he was a male teacher and I felt I did not understand men well enough to get insight into how he would feel if I kept asking him the same question. Or perhaps I was aware that Michael had a unique personality and the way he approached me made me feel comfortable enough not to be concerned about my presence. Or perhaps our conversations did not lead me to ask him all the questions about my being in his classroom.

As I worked with Michael, I fell in love with the children. Michael told me the first day his children were poor. There were many times some of them came to school without their snacks. The more time I spent in Michael's classroom, the more I felt responsible for the children. I realized what Michael meant when he said his children were poor. To me, some of the children in Michael's classroom lived on the edge. They experienced a lot of pain in their lives. Whenever Michael shared the children's stories with me, I wished I could help them a bit. I worried about their futures. I realized they were intelligent, caring children. Most of them were good storytellers. They told many stories about their lives in order to make sense of them. I began to focus more and more of my attention on the children rather than on Michael. The children kept me wondering and seeing the world in ways I had not seen before. I remember a little white boy who said to me, after his friend showed me her Chinese writing, "You know, I was Chinese when I was young and I know how to write this (Chinese characters)." The girl said, "I'm Chinese too" **(Journal; March 9, 1992)**.

I was frustrated about my interest in the children. I was aware my research was supposed to be about Michael, the teacher, not the children. I should focus my observations more on Michael. But each time I went to his classroom, there were so many things going on with the children's lives that I focussed my interest on them. My concern for them became a dilemma for me. As a researcher, I tried to solve this dilemma; however, the more I worked with the children, the more I realized I could not solve it. There were many times when I tried to focus my observations on Michael but before long I would again focus on the children because they asked me to read or write stories with them. I had no idea how I would write Michael's narrative account. However, I recorded lots of the children's stories because I loved them and their stories. In one of my journal entries, I reflected on my concerns.

> I know that the research should be about the teacher, Michael. But I realize the children in his classroom are very interesting. They are enthusiastic. They adapt themselves well with a stranger like me, the stranger from another culture. It does not seem to matter to them where I come from. They used to ask me but it was in a context. During that time they were having snack and one of them asked me my age. Therefore, I let them guess. All of them said, "Six." I said, "No." So, one of them said, "ten." I said, "No." At last David said, "If you don't want to tell me about your age, can you tell me where you came from?" I really enjoyed working with the children in Michael's classroom. But how could I write Michael's story? **(Journal; March 19, 1992)**

As I journeyed through the research, I could not solve my dilemma about focussing on the children. I managed my dilemma by telling myself the children were part of the research. There should be ways that the children reflected the teacher. I began to talk about my dilemma to a friend in my research community. My colleague told me I should keep on writing about the children even though I did not know what to do with their stories. He said it was the same with him. He kept on painting and sometimes he had no idea what he should do with all those paintings. One day I would get an idea about what to do with the stories. I agreed with him and felt better. Even though I could not solve my dilemma, I tried to ignore it and kept on writing the children's stories.

As I write this chapter, I realize that each moment that comes to our lives is precious. Each of our life stories is full of moments of wonder and surprise. If I knew each story beforehand, it would not be a story of wonder anymore. Campbell (1991) reminded me that life was full of moments of wonder. He wrote,

> Nothing is exciting
> if you know
> what the outcome is going
> to be. (p. 22)

In our life stories, we have a choice to enjoy that part of our stories and live with it or miss it. If I chose to miss part of the stories, I would miss it forever because, in life, there is no going back. I learned that every story of life was connected to the other. A part of the stories was connected to the whole.

The hardest time of my research was a time when Michael was sick and Carol was depressed. The doctor did not know what was wrong with Michael. He phoned me to tell me about his sickness. I felt desperate. I could not imagine how serious his sickness was. It seemed to me he was very sick and I was worried and frustrated. In one of my journal entries, I reflected,

> Michael called me this morning and told me that he was still sick and could not go to the school. He said that he missed school for a week already. He was really sick. However, he hoped that he would get better pretty soon. I was

> worried about Michael. I did not know how serious his sickness was. I felt as if I was in his situation. I was also sick. **(Journal; March 16, 1992)**

As I reflected on myself during that time, I found myself in another dilemma. I was shocked, on a personal level, at how vulnerable the research was. I was worried about Michael as a friend and as a teacher in my research study. I began to realize how much the two teachers influenced me as a friend and as a researcher. I could not take our relationships for granted. As a friend, I wished Michael would recover soon so we could work together again. As a researcher, I worried about the research. I was aware of my commitment to myself. I needed to get my research done so I could graduate. I was very concerned and began to think about finding another teacher to be a part of the study because I was not sure when Michael would recover and go back to his classroom. I could not imagine myself working with three teachers at the same time. I could not manage with too many teachers.

I was away from Michael's classroom for three weeks. I realized I missed the children and wanted to know how they were and how they managed with a substitute teacher. At the same time I was worried about Michael but I was afraid to call because I did not want him to feel that I was pushing him to go to work. In my journal entry, I wrote,

> I really missed Michael's class. The children were wonderful. I wanted to phone Michael and ask about his sickness but I was afraid that I would bother him. Michael was a very nice person. I knew that he worked quite hard both in his teaching and in his courses at the university. I wondered how he managed his work. **(Journal; March 17, 1992)**

Summary

As I reflected, I realized there were things that I could control, or bring into control, and those that were outside of, or beyond, the possibility of my control (Schutz, 1953). I saw the limitation of my power to control things and to see how much of my life was connected to other people's lives. I began to realize that research reflected life and life was researching. In one of my journal entries, I reflected,

> I began to see the limitation of my power to control what was going on in my life. And how much of our lives connected to other people's lives. In the reality of life, there was something that we could control and something that we could not control. As human beings, we needed to tolerate the uncertainty of life, be strong, and prepared ourselves to face with it. **(Journal; March 16, 1992)**

As a researcher and as a person, I thought I needed to be aware of the uncertainty in my life, my research. In some cases, the uncertainty of life created dilemmas. Sometimes I could resolve my dilemmas but sometimes I could not. What I did was to manage them. As I looked into myself, I could see the way I managed my dilemmas of uncertainty through talking to friends in my research community, through reflecting on them and through trying to learn from them. I was aware that I could not control all of the conditions that came into my life, but I was able to look at the conditions in different ways. I could look at them from different vantage points and view dilemmas as a part of my learning process, my growth.

Chapter VII

Dilemmas in Teaching

> "Yes," he thought, "between grief and nothing I will take grief." (Faulkner cited in Greene, 1973, p. 181)

What dilemmas do teachers of young children encounter and how do they manage their dilemmas? These were the research questions I reminded myself of as I journeyed with the two teachers. After I wrote Carol's and Michael's stories of dilemmas in their teaching, I reflected on their stories. Their stories reminded me of my teaching stories. Did I have dilemmas in my teaching? As I tried to think about my stories of dilemmas, I found I could not think of any. I had forgotten all of the details of my teaching, my day-to-day teaching. I had begun to forget what teaching was like. I was disappointed and returned to my proposal to refresh my thoughts about my teaching. As I read what I wrote about my teaching dilemmas, I saw that I only talked about the overall pictures of my dilemmas, not the day-to-day dilemmas. If my teaching was so important to me, why did I forget my dilemmas? What were my dilemmas? Did I have them?

As I told my story of forgetting to one of my friends in my research community, I realized I was facing a dilemma even as I tried to think about my teaching dilemmas. I became aware that dilemmas were a part of my life. My life was a dilemma in itself. Again, I tried to recall what my teaching was like. I recalled a dilemma which had frustrated me for a long time.

It was nine o'clock in the morning and I asked my students to line up in front of our class as usual. I told them to keep their feet on the line and to stop talking and playing. My children were aware of my expectations for them during line up. Therefore, they stayed quiet and tried to stand still. Most of the time, they behaved very well during line up time.

As the children lined up, the principal walked past the lines. She stopped at one of the children and asked, "Why do you wear runners to school?" The little boy was quiet. He did not say anything. I looked at the child and felt sympathy for him. Inside myself, I was angry and not pleased with what I saw. I did not want the principal to talk to my student like that. At the same time, I felt powerless. I could not do anything to help my student out of the situation. Then my principal said, "You'd better wear black shoes tomorrow." As she talked to the boy, she looked at me as if to ask, "Why do you let your student wear runners to school? Didn't I tell them they could not wear runners to school unless they have physical education?" I remembered myself looking back at her without saying anything. I was silenced. I knew I did not agree with some of the school rules. I began to think about my condition in the school. When I looked back at the five-year-old-boy, I saw myself in him. I remembered myself wearing runners to school because I felt that they looked much better than my black shoes. The picture of myself being punished by my teacher because I did not wear my girl scout uniform on a particular day also came to my mind. As a young girl, I broke some of school rules because they made no sense to me.

As the principal walked away, I was frustrated and asked myself, "Why does it really matter what kind of shoes the boy is wearing? What really matters is that he is here in the school." As a person, I knew we needed to respect the rights of other people. I realized that as a student, I was expected to respect and obey the rules of the school. But what if the rules did not make any sense? What if they were unreasonable rules? Did I need to respect all those rules? I found a way to solve this problem for myself as a young girl by not conforming but I could not find an answer for myself as a teacher. I did not know what I should do. Should I force my children to conform to the rules of the school? If I forced them to conform to the rules of the school, I lost respect for myself. I lost my own identity. I could not find reasons to explain to them. But what about the school community that I was in? What would they think of me? Having grown up in Thai culture, I realized the school's expectation quite well. I was aware of how I should act as a teacher. I knew that students needed to wear black shoes as part of the school uniforms. I could understand my principal's expectation of my student. But what should I tell my students? How could I please myself and my school community at the same time?

The above account was one from my everyday teaching experiences as a kindergarten teacher in Thailand. As a classroom teacher, what should I do in that situation? Should I confirm that my student should wear black shoes to school? Should I go and talk to the principal to say I did not agree with the rules of the school? If I did not pick either one of the choices, what should I do?

In this chapter, I present the ways in which Carol, Michael and I as classroom teachers managed our teaching dilemmas. Before I turn to our cases, I draw attention to the word "dilemma" and the place of dilemmas within teaching.

Dilemma: What Is Dilemma?

As friends, Carol and I once talked about the word "dilemma." Carol said,

> The word "dilemma," the word seems more like, that something's wrong. There is a problem that you need to work on, something to make it better. **(Conversation; March 25, 1992, p. 16)**

When I heard Carol, I really agreed with her. As I reflected on my teaching experiences in Thailand, I found I hardly mentioned my teaching dilemmas, my teaching "problems" to my colleagues. I felt if I told them I had a dilemma or a "problem," they might think I was not a good teacher.

The word "dilemma" comes from the Latin "dilemmat" and the Greek "di," two + "limma," assumption. The root meaning of the term "dilemma" is "two assumptions." In Thai culture, we do not have one word that equals the word "dilemma." We have a metaphor, "two ways" or "getting away from tigers, face crocodiles" for the dilemma situations. To me, the Thai metaphor, "getting away from tigers, face crocodiles" represented the word "dilemma" very well. In my teaching, there were a lot of situations in which I felt if I tried to get away from tigers, then I experienced crocodiles. I did not know what I should do. Should I let a crocodile or a tiger eat me? If I did not want either one of them to eat me, how could I get away from them? Could I get away from them?

Teaching: What Is Teaching?

Was teaching a profession of trying to get away from tigers only to find yourself faced with crocodiles or was it more than that? To me teaching was more than a matter of either/or dichotomies. It was very complicated. Teaching went beyond being described by the metaphor of getting away from tigers only to face crocodiles. The realities of teaching were multiple. There were no absolute answers for what good teaching was or any theories or directions that governed every teaching situation (Greene, 1978b). When I looked at my dilemma, I did not see myself as a person who had to make clear choices between what I believed and what the school rule was. I did not want to make a choice that created another dilemma for me. It was a dilemma of not wanting to make a choice. The dilemma within the dilemma. I did not look for an "absolute" and "perfect" answer for this particular situation. My aim was to manage this dilemma in a way that I, as a teacher, could live with the results of my action, a way that made me feel comfortable enough to go on with my teaching.

What was teaching? To me, teaching was facing dilemmas in a way that created internal conflicts for teachers. It was not necessary for teachers to make a choice when facing a teaching dilemma but it was necessary for them to learn to manage their dilemmas in a way that allowed them to go on teaching.

Let us go back to my account of dilemma. Someone might wonder why this particular situation became a dilemma for me. For some people, the same situation might not create a dilemma.

How Did My Dilemma Arise?: Dilemma As a Matter of One's Personal History and Philosophy

As I reflected on my account of dilemma, I realized this particular situation became an ongoing dilemma for me because of who I was in relation to the world. As I looked back at my childhood experiences, I felt that they had a great deal to do with both the way I defined my dilemma and what I did to manage it. As a child, I kept breaking school rules that I felt made no sense. For example, we were required to wear girl scout uniforms which were long sleeved on a particular day even when the weather was very hot. I felt my learning had nothing to do with how I dressed. Therefore, I broke the school rule. Sometimes I got caught. I decided I had to think more carefully about how to break the rules without getting caught. I had to learn how to play the educational game. If I understood the rules well enough, I could break them and I would not get caught.

When I became a teacher, I still believed that how children dressed had nothing to do with their learning. The most important thing for me was that they came to school. Therefore, when my principal asked the boy to wear black shoes to school, I felt as if she was "attacking" me at the same time. "Why can't she realize that shoes have nothing to do with children's learning?" My past experiences as a young girl came back to my mind and I felt frustrated. As a teacher, how could I play the school game? Did I understand the rules well enough to play? Did I want to play?

I am reminded of a story my friend told me about a grandfather and a little boy. One day a grandfather and a little boy went out for a walk. After they walked for a while, the boy told his grandfather, "Grandpa, the wind is very cold." The old man looked at the boy and said, "It is you that is cold. The wind is not cold." My situation was like the wind. As a person, I brought myself into the situation and that affected the way I saw the situation. It was I who thought the wind was cold. For others, the wind might not be cold at all. The same situation might not create dilemmas for them.

What Was My Process of Managing Dilemmas: Dilemma As an Argument with One's Self

As my principal walked away, for a moment I wanted to run after her and tell her what I thought. I wanted to tell her I did not agree with the school rule and I did not want her to talk to my student like that. However, I did not do anything. I stood still for a second and then followed my students into our classroom. I kept thinking about the situation. I realized that I was frustrated and tried to keep my frustration inside so I could begin teaching. Even as I taught, I had an argument within myself about what I should do about the situation.

This reminded me of Max, a character in a storybook Where the Wild Things Are (1963). To me, Max created "wild things" in his mind. As time passed, the "wild things" got bigger and bigger. However, with the "magic trick," Max could tame those "wild things" in himself. Like Max, I created those "wild things" in myself and I tried to tame them by reflecting, thinking, and questioning myself about what I should do. What became a crocodile and a tiger for me might not be wild for somebody else.

Hemingway (1952) wrote about dilemma as an argument within one's self in one of his books, The Old Man And the Sea. When the old man hooked a "big" fish, did he "really" fight with the fish or with himself? When I first read the book, I questioned myself, "Why didn't the old man let the big fish go so he could hook other fish? He didn't have to torture himself for only one big fish." As I reflected on myself and the book, I realized that it was not the fish that kept the old man in the fight. It was an argument the old man had with himself that kept him going on. For the old man, what did the big fish represent? To him, it might represent life. If the old man let the big fish go, he might die inside himself. He would lose because he quit. He cut off his life line. To me, the big fish was like a degree. "Why don't I let it go so I can do other things in my life? Why do I still hang on to it?" The degree might not represent anything but it was the fight within me that kept me hanging on to it.

As I wrote this chapter, I kept asking myself, "Why didn't I do something with the situation? Why didn't I go and talk to my principal instead of getting frustrated by myself?" As I reflected on my story, I realized there was a hierarchy of authority in my school. I was aware that my principal had more authority than I. At the same time, there was a voice in me that said, "Don't get yourself into trouble." I realized this school rule was part of my culture. Every time we wore school uniforms, we were supposed to wear black shoes in order to conform. The reality we constructed and took for granted allowed for neither autonomy nor disagreement. It silenced me and made me afraid to question because I did not know what other teachers and my principal would think of me. Their images of me as a nice polite person would be destroyed. They might also think I was crazy because I took it too seriously. At the same time, I realized that if I decided to talk to my principal, I would create another dilemma for myself. The new dilemma would be more serious. I needed to try to find ways to keep my dilemma underneath the surface.

Why didn't I try to compromise the dilemma by talking to the boy and asking him why he didn't wear black shoes to school? As I reflected on the story, I was aware that because I brought my personal history with me, that made my dilemma more complicated.

I did not want to talk to my student because I wanted to make a point that what and how we dressed had nothing to do with our learning. I tried to fight the school system. I did not want to compromise the dilemma.

How Do I Manage My Dilemma?: Personal Strategies As an Instrument to Manage the Unsolvable Problem

As I thought about my situation, I decided to keep my frustration inside. I tried to submerge my dilemma and to wait for the "right" time to bring it up and do something with it. I did not say anything to my student for not wearing black shoes to school and I did not go and talk to my principal. Instead, I managed the frustration by looking at the dilemma from another perspective, that is, the administrator's perspectives. I tried to think about the reasons for this rule. As I put myself in other people's shoes, I found some reasons to make me feel better, for example, if they did not require students to wear black shoes, students might wear a variety of shoes to school. This might create more problems for parents and society because some children wanted to show off their shoes. Some parents could not afford to buy different kinds of shoes for their children. Maybe that was the reason administrators required students to wear black shoes with school uniforms.

As I was writing, I looked at my dilemma from different perspectives which made me feel better. I felt that I could broaden my ideas and learned to see other people's points of view that were different from mine. I felt better as I reflected on the ongoing dilemma. Did my reflection help me to manage this dilemma?

At one level, the reflection helped me to learn to live with this dilemma. It helped me submerge my dilemma. However, deep in my heart, I realized the dilemma was still going on. In my teaching experiences, this particular dilemma had not come up again and I also did not remember what the boy wore for the rest of the year. I did not look at his feet again. I also tried to ignore what kinds of shoes other children wore to school. I was aware I did not want to make an issue out of it because, in my practice, I did nothing. On the surface, I managed my dilemma by reflecting on it and by trying to understand other people's perspectives. But at a deeper level, it was still an ongoing dilemma for me and every time I thought about it, I felt a personal pain.

This reminded me of a story of when I was in grade three. During that time I did not do my homework as well as I usually did. My teacher was not pleased with that. She expected me to be a good student. However, she never asked me why I did not do it as well as I could. Neither did she tell me why she was not pleased. She treated me like an object by asking me to tell my parents to come to see her. As a third grade student, having my parents come to school was a "big thing" for me. I remembered I was scared and did not want my parents to come to school. I did not want to disappoint my parents. I also thought that when my friends saw my parents, they would realize I was a bad student. At the same time, I knew I was supposed to tell my parents to go to see my teacher because she told me to tell them. I felt she had more authority and power than I. I was worried and did not know what to do. I did not want to tell my parents and, at the same time, I did not want my teacher to punish me because I did not tell my parents. As a little girl, I did not tell anybody and managed my dilemma by ignoring my teacher's words. I pretended that I was dreaming and that her request was only in a dream, not reality. In that way, I did not have to tell my parents about my teacher's words. As I grew up, I developed an idea that if somebody asked me to do something that did not make sense to me and that I did not want to do, I could ignore them by not listening to them. That way I did not have to do it. I learned to let the words pass my ears without hearing them. Therefore, as a teacher, when I felt powerless, I learned to pretend not to see things.

As I was teaching, there were a lot of dilemmas that I managed by pretending not to see them again. I had little time to reflect on my dilemmas. When a lot of dilemmas emerged at the same time, I felt overwhelmed, powerless and wanted to get away from my teaching for a while.

I decided to continue my university study after teaching for about two and a half years. During teaching, I felt like an automaton. I did not like my teaching. To me, my teaching was boring. It was the same every day and I hated it. One of the reasons I wanted to pursue my study was because I wanted to know about other people's teaching. How did they feel about their teaching? How did they stay fresh in their teaching? How did they manage dilemmas that came into their everyday teaching? What did they think about their teaching dilemmas? These questions led me to Carol's and Michael's classrooms for six months. We had many conversations about their teaching dilemmas and how they managed them.

Reflecting on Two Teachers' Stories

Carol's Story: How Did Carol Manage Her Teaching Dilemmas?

What kinds of strategies did Carol use to manage her teaching dilemmas? How did her dilemmas emerge? As I reflected on Carol's story, I realized that when Carol first came to teach at St. Peter's School, she did not come alone. She carried her past experiences as a mother and a kindergarten teacher, her philosophy of education, her views of life, and her image of herself as a teacher. Like a river that could swallow people while they enjoyed it, this knowledge created dilemmas for Carol at the same time as they helped her manage her dilemmas of teaching.

As I was writing this chapter about how Carol managed her dilemmas of teaching, I reflected on how I, as a kindergarten teacher, managed my dilemmas of teaching at the same time. Therefore, the stories I tell about how Carol managed her dilemmas of teaching are colored by my stories of how I managed my dilemmas.

In managing her dilemmas of teaching, Carol tried different kinds of approaches. She looked for ways she felt were appropriate both for her and her students.

Conflicts over a philosophy as one source of the dilemmas of teaching

When Carol first taught in grade one at St. Peter's School, she worked hard and tried her best in teaching. She developed her own image of what the grade one classroom and her role as a classroom teacher should be. With her past experiences as a mother and a teacher in the Preprimary program, Carol believed in play and a child-centered philosophy. At the beginning of the year, Carol was fresh and energetic. "I think when I started last year, I started with a real feeling of 'it's just going to be great'" (**Conversation; April 29, 1992, p. 14**). She was ready to express her philosophy in her practice of teaching. She wanted to show everyone the wonderful things that happened to the children when she used play in her teaching. "...showed everybody what a wonderful thing it happened in---put play in the program..." (**Conversation; March 18, 1992, p. 22**). After Carol taught for a while, she found out that her teaching did not fit with the children's realities. For the first time, she encountered a few students who did not respond positively to an independent, child-selected program. Some of them were not active learners and could not make choices on their own. The behavior of these few children disrupted the learning for the whole class. Carol was disappointed and frustrated about her teaching. She tried to think about ways to help her students learn. At the same time, she was strongly advised by administrators, school consultants, counsellors and experts in attentional deficit disorder to offer a more structured program to her students. When Carol realized she was facing a dilemma, she reflected on her philosophy, her teaching, and her children and was not sure about her philosophy and her teaching. She began to question herself and what she was doing. "I---um---questioned what I was doing and thought, 'Maybe I can't do this. Maybe these kids can't learn in this environment. Maybe I have to make it more structured for them to learn'" **(Conversation; February 4, 1992, p. 9)**. Was there anything wrong with Carol's philosophy? If nothing was wrong with her philosophy, why did it not work with some of the children? Maybe these children could not learn in the environment that she provided for them. It might not fit their learning styles. What should Carol do in this situation? Should she change her philosophy and her teaching to fit some of the children? Should she continue her teaching and ignore some of the children? What should she do as a classroom teacher?

Reflection on the web of self and the realities of the situation as one way to manage an unsolvable dilemma

The more Carol reflected on her teaching and the context of her classroom, the more she was frustrated. Carol realized that she needed to do something with the situation. Unlike me, she could not pretend not to see it and do nothing. She was aware that she had to do something. As a teacher, Carol did not have a lot of time to reflect on the situation. She realized that if she did not hurry, she could run out of time because the school year and the grade one curriculum were structured around world time, not inner time. With the frustration that came both from outside and inside, Carol saw her choices as getting away from tigers, experiencing crocodiles. She decided to make a choice between tigers and crocodiles. She changed her teaching style to fit with some of her children. "So, I changed, to a quite a structured day, and I gave them only play time for the last hour of the day and we did this together, this together, this together, and I had reading group here, reading group there..." **(Conversation; February 4, 1992, p. 9)**. Therefore, in her teaching, Carol began to control the children's learning step by step.

Even though Carol changed her style of teaching to fit some of the children as a way to manage her dilemma, she was still not happy with what she did. She could not put her dilemma away. The dilemma kept coming back to her mind as she worked with the children. She carried her dilemma home with her. When she was with her family, she thought about her teaching. Was the dilemma intruding in her own personal space and in her own inner time? Carol was frustrated and felt there was something wrong with her teaching. She tried to figure out what it was. What was it that made Carol frustrated? Was it her teaching? Did her teaching fit with all of the children? If it did not fit with all of them, what should Carol do?

As Carol continued teaching, she got angry with herself and her teaching. She felt she could not stand her teaching because it did not reflect who she was and what she believed teaching and learning should be. "Oh! I hated it (teaching). I'd come and I'd just be angry and I'd come home frustrated and I'd go to sleep, you know, I slept so much" (**Conversation; February 4, 1992, p. 9**). Carol did not want to control the children's learning. She ended up having an argument within herself about the choice she had made. Carol thought about her students and her teaching over and over. Her new style of teaching created a dilemma for her. It was a dilemma within a dilemma. Should Carol go back to her own style of teaching? What about some of the children who were not independent learners? If Carol went back to her own style of teaching, what was she going to do with them? In the same way if Carol did not go back to her own style of teaching, how could she live with her teaching? How could Carol be alive in her teaching if she could not be herself, if her teaching did not reflect her philosophy? What about the children who were independent learners, the ones who could make choices on their own? How could Carol find a balance between the two groups of children?

The more Carol reflected on what she saw happening in her classroom and on her philosophy of education, the more frustrated she became with herself and her teaching. She felt she could not live with the results of her actions. Her teaching did not reflect her philosophy. When she looked at her students, she felt it was not fair for the rest of them who were independent learners and could make choices on their own. "It was painful to teach because I saw kids hurting all the time. They were hurting because they couldn't do it" (**Conversation; February 4, 1992, p. 10**). At the same time, when Carol viewed the learning process from some of the children's perspectives, she realized that her new style of teaching helped some of them in their learning because they could not handle open freedom on their own. They needed some specific activities to moderate their learning. What should Carol do now?

After Carol reflected on all of her students, she realized there was nothing wrong with her philosophy. Some of her students could fit with her philosophy. But some could not. In order to manage this particular dilemma with this particular classroom, Carol felt she needed to adjust her philosophy to be flexible to all of the children. She needed to have some structured time for the children who were not independent at the same time as she needed to provide some activities for the children who were independent. Carol also learned that she could not change her philosophy from one thing to another. "I can't change what I believe about children" (**Conversation; February 4, 1992, p. 10**). To be alive in teaching, Carol was aware that her teaching needed to reflect both her philosophy and all of the children in her classroom. She could not separate her teaching from her philosophy and from the children. What she believed was what she taught. After reflecting on her philosophy of education, her practice of teaching, and the context of the classroom, Carol realized a way to manage her dilemma. This time she did not see her dilemma as a choice between tigers and crocodiles. Carol was aware that in reality, we do not live in a world of white and black. Many times we live in the grey. In managing her dilemma, Carol realized that she did not look for a perfect answer to solve her teaching dilemma. Instead, she looked for the way that she could live with it, a way that was appropriate for both her and her students. In order to submerge her dilemma, Carol broadened her philosophy to fit with all of her students.

Therefore, in her practice of teaching, Carol integrated both structured time and play time to include all of her children. "And so I loosened it up again and worked some structures in but it was in a totally different way in a whole class environment" (**Conversation; February 4, 1992, p. 10**). In the morning, Carol taught all of the children in groups for math, reading, and writing. In the afternoon, she provided small groups for the children to engage in their learning. The children had their own choices to do what they wanted to do. In this way, Carol had opportunities to work with the children who were dependent and needed specific instructions in a small group at the same time that it gave opportunities for the children who were independent to work on their own. What did Carol do in this particular situation? Did she solve her dilemma or did she manage her dilemma? If Carol solved her dilemma like one puts a puzzle together, the same dilemma should not come up again because the jigsaw puzzle was done. If it came up again, Carol did not solve her dilemma. Instead, she managed her dilemma by adjusting her philosophy to this particular classroom. It seemed to me Carol did not change her philosophy at all. She only adapted it to the particular situation. Let us continue our conversation by looking at what happened to Carol the following year, the year I spent six months in her classroom.

An ongoing dilemma

In the following year, Carol moved to teach in a kindergarten classroom. At the beginning of the year, she was glad because it was the level that she most preferred. She felt that she had previous experiences teaching in the Preprimary program. She was confident in her teaching. She hoped that this time she could express her philosophy in her teaching more smoothly than in the previous year. "...this year, so number one, I've got the confidence, number two, I've done kindergarten---Early Childhood. This is where I belong. This is what I'm good at" (**Conversation; April 29, 1992, p. 15**). However, as time went by, Carol realized the same dilemma recurred. Different from the children at the Preprimary program, the kindergarten children at St. Peter's School came from various backgrounds. Some of them were not active learners when they first came in. They were dependent and could not make choices in their learning because of their backgrounds. However, some of them were independent and they were active learners on their own. What should Carol do? How should she manage her teaching in a classroom that had a variety of children?

Carol now realized, from her experiences as a first grade teacher, more about the grade one curriculum her students would face the following year. As a kindergarten teacher, Carol realized that she needed to prepare her students to have positive experiences with prints to build a broad foundation for grade one. In order to have a broad foundation for grade one, the children had to be aware of what reading and writing were. They needed to be exposed to the alphabet and printed letters. As a classroom teacher, Carol did not want her students to go to grade one with a sense of failure. Therefore, she tried to build experiences in which the children could feel successful. Her expectations of the children made Carol's dilemma more complicated.

At the same time, Carol was aware of her philosophy. As a person, Carol realized that everybody developed their own inner time and space for themselves and their learning. As Carol reflected on how she had managed her dilemma the previous year, she became more aware of how important her own inner time and space were for her. She needed both inner time and space for herself in managing her dilemma. Therefore, when Carol looked at her children, she realized how important inner time and space were for them. All of her students developed their own inner time and space for themselves and their learning. As a teacher, Carol was conscious that every child walked on his/her own time line and he/she would never get to the same place all at once. But the grade one curriculum was structured around world time and outer space, not inner time and space. How did Carol manage her dilemma? How could she encourage her students to walk on their own space and time and yet meet the expectations of the grade one curriculum? What about the children who were dependent? How could they walk on their own time and space?

As Carol reflected on all of her conditions, she was frustrated. The ongoing dilemma was more complicated than the previous year. However, Carol was aware that she could manage her dilemma better than during the previous year. This time, Carol did not see herself as a person who had to make a clear choice between tigers and crocodiles. Neither did she look for an absolute answer for her teaching. By reflecting on her philosophy of education, the children, and her past experiences as a grade one teacher, Carol could find ways to manage her dilemma. Like the previous year, Carol broadened her philosophy to cover all of the children in her classroom. She provided some specific activities for the children who were not independent. In this way, she helped them move towards independence. At the same time she provided free-play activities for the children who could make their own choices. Carol tried to integrate play into her teaching in ways which reflected her philosophy and, at the same time, allowed each child to develop on their own space and time.

The ways Carol managed her teaching dilemma reflected who she was as a teacher, the realities of the children, the expectation of the grade one teachers and, at the same time, allowed the children to walk in their own space and time. The same teaching dilemma might recur the following year but with her personal practical knowledge, I believe Carol could manage her dilemma in a way that she could live with the results of her actions.

A sword with two blades as one kind of dilemma of teaching

There is a Thai metaphor "dub song kom" in which the word "dub" meant "sword," "song" meant "two," and "kom" meant "blade" or "edge." Therefore, "dub song kom" meant a sword with two blades or two edges. I tried to imagine where this metaphor came from. In Thai history, we have many wars. Whenever there was war, we used a sword as one of our weapons. Thai soldiers used swords to kill their enemies but if they were not careful they could injure themselves at the same time. I thought this might be the origin of the metaphor "a sword with two blades," that is, something that could cut both ways. It could kill evil but, at the same time, if we were not careful, we could be in danger of killing ourselves.

Very often in my culture, we use this metaphor to describe medications. Having grown up in a medical family, I sometimes felt that medication could kill me at the same time as it cured me. One of the examples I thought of was cancer. When we use chemotherapy to attack bad cells in our bodies, it killed some of our good cells at the same time.

As I thought of the metaphor "a sword with two blades" it made me wonder about Carol and myself. I began to think about the word "knowledge" and felt that sometimes my knowledge was like a sword with two blades. What I thought I knew helped me understand the world more but at the same time it could frame the world for me. It made me take the familiar world for granted and not be curious about the world around me. This reminded me of my relationships with people. There were many times when I felt that I took relationships for granted. Because of my knowledge of a person, I had expectations of what he/she tried to say and sometimes I listened less to his/her words.

Because of my expectations of that person, I could hear only what I wanted him/her to say.

When Carol mentioned to me that nothing new was coming from the children from which she could create a curriculum, it reminded me of the metaphor "a sword with two blades." Was Carol's philosophy like "a sword with two blades"? Could it cut both ways? On one side of the blade, it helped her in her teaching. On the other side, if Carol was not careful, it could limit her teaching.

I did not realize this metaphor when I worked with Carol. When I was writing this chapter, I had been working with Carol's stories for a year. This metaphor came to my mind. The more I reflected on Carol's stories, the more I felt that her philosophy was like a sword with two blades. As a teacher, Carol believed that the classroom curriculum should emerge from the children. Her practice of teaching reflected her philosophy. Carol always looked at the children's backgrounds and tried to build her teaching around their backgrounds. She also tried to look at the world through the children's eyes. "Instead of trying to teach them, I come into them and watch them---through their eyes---try to think about the experience through them" (**Conversation; June 3, 1992, p. 15**). Carol realized she was facing a dilemma when she felt nothing new was showing up in the children's play around which she could create a new theme. What should Carol do? How should she build a new theme in her teaching when nothing new came from the children? Should she pick a theme by herself without looking at the children?

As I reflected on Carol's dilemma a year after being in her classroom, I figured something out about our philosophies, her philosophy and my philosophy. Our philosophies might be like a sword with two blades. If we were not careful, it could limit our teaching at the same time as it helped us in our teaching. Was it because of Carol's expectations that she felt nothing new was coming from the children? Was she looking for a new theme that would satisfy her? Did her expectation make her listen less to what the children tried to say and to become less curious about their learning? Did Carol look for a specific answer from her children, the answer that she expected it to be? Did she structure her teaching to be a teacher-directed approach within a child-centered approach?

Vivian Paley, a kindergarten teacher and a writer, experienced the same situation as Carol. In her article "On Listening to What the Children Say," Paley (1986) mentioned the word "curiosity." She talked about how important the word "curiosity" was for her in her teaching. Because she knew her children so well and had expectations of what their answers would be, Paley found she listened less to her children. She was looking for specific answers from them and was less curious about what they thought. In Bad Guys Don't Have Birthdays, Paley (1988) talked about the situation. She wrote,

> When I listened to the children I did not use their ideas. I paid attention only long enough to adapt their words to my plans. (p. 8)

Paley (1986) wrote about a time when a high school science teacher came to her class to spend time with the children. As she observed the high school teacher teach, Paley had a feeling that he was a great and wonderful teacher because he could turn every child's answer or question into an interesting thing to discuss. As she reflected on the situation, Paley realized the high school teacher listened to what the children said without expectations of what their answers should be. He listened with curiosity.

As I was writing this chapter, I came to my office every day. Every time I came in, I looked at a bonzai in our office. I told myself and a friend that the bonzai was lovely and we both wished we could have one of our own. Whenever we saw it together, we talked about our knowledge of how to take care of a bonzai and admired another friend who took good care of it. I talked to him about different kinds of bonzai in Thailand. Sometimes, we discussed how hard it was to make a tree to be a bonzai because it needed proper space and proper food and water. However, we never came and had a closer look at the bonzai. One day when I was writing this chapter, my friend came in and he looked at the bonzai as usual. But this time, he looked closer at the bonzai and wondered why the color of its trunk was different from the color of the branches. As he touched the trunk and branches, he saw something different. He saw the glue on the bonzai. At that moment, he realized the bonzai was not real. It was artificial. When he told me, I stopped writing and felt disappointed. I had not thought the bonzai was artificial. Because of my expectation that every plant in our office had to be real, I thought the bonzai was also real and never came and looked closely at it. I was less curious about the details of the bonzai and limited myself from seeing the world of artificiality.

This also reminded me of myself when I first visited Carol's classroom. On my first day in her classroom, I was fresh and open to everything that came into sight. Everything was new and exciting. I was curious about her teaching, the children's learning, and what was going on in her classroom. As I came to Carol's classroom more often, I learned the routines of her classroom and began to have expectations for how things would be in her classroom. I closed some parts of my world to what I expected them to be. I was less curious about what was going on in her classroom and looked for specific things to happen. I knew what I wanted to look for and I sometimes overlooked the details in her classroom. I wanted to observe Carol, the teacher, and paid less attention to her children. I tried to keep the rhythm of my life moving with a "minimum of distraction" (Paley, 1986, p. 122). But I forgot that the distraction might be the most important thing for me. As I reflected on my fieldnotes, I realized how my own expectations limited my world. I began to open my world again.

I did not talk to Carol about whether she looked for specific answers from her children. I only began to figure out this way of understanding her teaching after a year had gone by. I was surprised to see her teaching differently from the way I used to see it.

As I looked back on my teaching, I am aware that I often looked for specific answers from my children, the answers I thought would be right. I structured my teaching around what I thought was good for my students. I listened to their stories to find the parts that were relevant to my stories.

Let us go back to Carol's dilemma to find out what she did to manage her dilemma. After Carol realized the curriculum in her classroom was at a dead end, she was frustrated. I remember one day when I went to visit Carol. She looked tired and after class that day we did not have our usual conversation. Before I left the school, Carol said, "I feel down today" (**Fieldnotes; March 11, 1992**).

I did not know what made Carol feel down and I tried to figure out what it was. As I came home, I began to reflect on her life of teaching. It seemed to me there was a dilemma going on in her teaching and she needed time to think about it herself. As I looked back at myself, I understood Carol more. There were many times when I was facing a dilemma, that I wanted to be alone and did not want to talk about my dilemma. I needed my own personal space and time to think through my dilemma and to try to find ways to manage it. Also, there were many times when I wanted to share my dilemmas with the people I trusted in order that I could see how I would manage them. In my journal entry, I wrote

> I felt that there was a dilemma going on in Carol's teaching and it seemed to me that she was working on her own dilemma and did not want to talk about it. Maybe she might want to talk about it after she saw ways to manage it herself. (**Journal; March 11, 1992**)

A week later, in a conversation after class, Carol shared her dilemma with me. She had figured out a way to manage her dilemma. Carol reflected on her role as a teacher. She believed that a classroom teacher should be an observer. In her practice, she spent most of her time observing and interacting with the children. Carol saw a new theme emerge in her classroom from the children when she provided activities that related to St. Patrick's Day for them. She found out that the children were interested in hiding "gold." She tried to build a new theme from what the children were interested in by interacting with them. Carol talked to them and asked them some questions.

> And I encouraged their creativity too, when they started with the gold, I went up and talked with them and gave them some more questions, and you could see them integrating their thoughts and planning ahead because of the types of questions that I asked them. (**Conversation; March 18, 1992, p. 12**)

After that Carol tried to figure out a new theme that would fit in with "gold" for her and for the children. From her observations, Carol found that the children were interested in different kinds of stories. They had a lot of story backgrounds. She was searching for the possibility that a new theme could develop. After reflecting on her children, Carol saw two possibilities that a new theme could develop into. One was fairy tales. The other one was a store or money. She decided to provide different kinds of materials about fairy tales for the children to engage in first and to watch for their interests. If it did not work out, Carol thought that she would put out some materials for a store for the children to engage in. When the children saw the material on fairy tales, they were really engaged in it. Therefore, based on the children's interests, Carol built a new theme on fairy tales.

The way in which Carol managed this particular dilemma was unique and it reflected who she was as a teacher. As I was writing this chapter, it raised a new question for me, "Did Carol really use a child-centered approach in her teaching or did she use a teacher-centered in a child-centered approach or did she use a teacher-child approach?" This was not a question of what was right or wrong in teaching. The question might be only a matter of self-awareness, a question that asks us to listen to our children more at the same time as we listen to ourselves in our teaching. It also showed that in managing her teaching dilemma, Carol did not see her teaching as dichotomous between a child-centered approach or a teacher-directed approach. She was concerned in how she would manage this particular dilemma in this particular context.

As a kindergarten teacher, I felt this particular dilemma was very hard to manage in day by day teaching because of who we were and the time and space we had for our reflections. Our educational philosophies could be "a sword with two blades" if we were not careful in reflecting on them. As a teacher, I found it was hard to reflect on my philosophy because everything was a rush in teaching. Sometimes I could not find my own space and inner time to really look at my teaching and my philosophy. Having grown up in our culture, I was trained to look for specific answers, to see the world as right or wrong. Our culture asked for the product of our thinking, not the process of it. What was important was the product, not the process. It was not a surprise to me as I reflected on myself through Carol's dilemma and found that in my interaction with my children, I had often looked for specific answers.

There were no specific ways to manage this particular dilemma. In my researching with Carol and Michael, I did not look for "right" or "wrong" answers in teaching. I was not interested in the product of the research story. What was important for me was the process and how we all learned from the interaction we had with each other. It took me a year to raise a new question from this particular dilemma and to try to figure out the ways Carol managed this dilemma. To me, Carol did her best in managing this dilemma. She showed us how she used her "personal practical knowledge" to manage her teaching dilemma (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988b). In teaching and life, we do not ask for an answer or an "absolute" way to manage a dilemma because there might not be an answer. We ask for new questions to make us more aware of what we are doing, to make us look closer into ourselves. From that standpoint, we reflect on ourselves and try to improve our teaching.

The uncertainty of life as a dilemma of teaching

Whenever I think about life, I always ask myself, "What is life?" The only answer I twice gave to myself without thinking was, "Life is an uncertainty." It seemed to me that the answer became part of me without my awareness. I tried to think about the stories that led me to see life as an uncertainty.

I remember as a little girl, I loved to have cousins come and stay overnight at our house. I felt that it was fun because I had more friends to play with other than my brother. At one time my grandmother's sister came to visit us and I had a lot of fun with her. She was a happy woman to be around and she knew how to make me laugh. I really enjoyed her visit. When she left, I looked forward to seeing her for another visit. However, I did not see her again because she was sick and suddenly died. When my mother and aunt told me, I felt sad because I knew that she would never come back to play with me again. As a little girl, I never realized that the good-bye I said to her before she left our house would be our last good-bye. That was the first time that I learned about death in my childhood life. Only a few years after that, my aunt's brother died from an accident. I learned death was a part of life.

As I grew up, I experienced life more and began to see life as an uncertainty, a kind of suffering in a way. I remembered the time my brother and I kept crying and crying because our aunt had to leave us and we missed her. At that time, I felt as if my heart was broken and there was nothing left in it. After a week, she came back and we were happy again.

I was in grade five when I first said good-bye to my parents with the feeling that the first part of my childhood had gone and I was beginning a different stage of my life. The time I was away from my parents taught me a lot of things about life and the uncertainty of it. I learned that I could not stop the world time as I wished to but I could stop my inner time. I could dream about my life outside a boarding school but it had to be secret within myself. At one time my father told me that I could reach him as I thought of him and that made me feel much better about going back to the school.

By the time I was an adult, I had said many good-byes to many people on different occasions. Every time I said good-bye to them, I always hoped we would come into contact again. But sometimes life did not go the way I wanted it to. There were many times when I said good-bye to people whom I had learned to know and love and found that we would never meet again in world time. Tan (1989) in one of her stories The Joy Luck Club expressed my feeling well. She wrote,

> And now at the airport, after shaking hands with everybody, waving good-bye, I think about all the different ways we leave people in this world. Cheerily waving good-bye to some at airports, knowing we'll never see each other again. Leaving others on the side of the road, hoping that we will. Finding my mother in my father's story and saying good-bye before I have a chance to know her better. (p. 330)

I realized more about death as a kind of great good-bye, an ending of a story, when my grandfather died. I did not know exactly how I felt when I heard the news from my mother. I did not feel sad but was more in the stage of shock and tried to figure out what death meant. I began to think back on my relationship with him. To me, his death was like the ending of a long story, his story of life maybe. As in every story, the ending of the story always gives a meaning to what preceded it (Bateson, 1984). I began to think about my story of him and felt that my story was not ended by his death. My story of him was still alive, only his story that was ended had to find a new beginning. My story of him had not ended yet.

I went to his funeral with a feeling of confusion in myself. I did not know how I should act or what I should do. Should I cry? Should I be myself? As I sat down and looked at his picture, a lot of memories of him came to my mind and made me wonder about our lives, his life and my life. I was wondering about where he would be during that time and what made him come to the earth. "Did he come to birth again after his death? Did he come to live another life?" I began to think about my life. "What is it that made me come to the earth and get to know him in order to be apart again?" I spent most of my time in the funeral thinking about these questions.

Before he was cremated, a monk who knew him very well talked about how well he had lived his life as a person. As he began to talk about the inevitability of death, I began to realize how much of my life connected to death. As I looked around myself, I saw a lot of people including my mom crying but I did not cry. I was thinking about my life and death. "What is my funeral going to be like? Are there going to be a lot of people talking about my story of life? Did my grandfather really die? Did his story really end or did he just change into another form of life, a beginning of a new story?" As I thought of the questions, I told my mother that I wanted to see his body for the last time. As I looked at his body, I felt overwhelmed and began to question myself, "Is this my grandfather? Am I going to be like him when I die?" I walked away from the crematorium with the feeling of myself getting smaller and smaller. As I sat down and watched the line of smoke rising to the sky, I realized that his story of me really ended. I was no longer alive in his new story anymore. I died from him at the moment that he ended his story to find the beginning of a new story.

As I reflected on my grandfather's story, I felt his story was like a dilemma in itself. My grandfather was really sick before he died. He had cancer and the doctors tried to help him solve his dilemma but they could not. My grandfather died. It might be the way he thought he could solve his dilemma of suffering. However, he could not solve it because it just reappeared in other forms, the form of which I was not a part. He could only manage his dilemma.

The next morning when we went back to pick up his ashes at the temple, I felt fresh and calm inside myself and began to make sense of the last lesson my grandfather had taught me about life before his stories really ended. To me, he said, "Life is an uncertainty, a kind of suffering in itself and death is inevitable, the only thing that was certain in life." As I looked back at my grandfather's death, I felt as Bateson (1984) described, "Death is also the moment of a gift that the old give to the young, a last opportunity to teach about life" (p. 206). But what about the death of the young? What story did it tell to the old? What did we learn from the death of the young ones we love? How would we manage our feeling with the death of the young? Were they supposed to die early? Why were their stories so short?

As a teacher, Carol experienced the death of one of her students. I recall Carol told me that she was happy when she came to school the first day of the week. When she heard the bad news, she was shocked. Why him? Why did he commit suicide? Why did he decide to end his story this way? As a person, Carol felt that it was too early for the boy to end his story of life. The boy was very young. A lot of stories in his life had not been told yet. Was it too early for him to end his story? He still had a long story to live. What made him decide to end his story?

What bothered Carol most about the boy's death was that it was unexpected. It happened quite suddenly. She had not realized that the good-bye she said to the boy the last time she met him would be the last good-bye for them. Otherwise, she would have tried to protect him before it really happened. She would have tried to change the boy's mind. Was there anything that Carol could have done to help the boy manage his life dilemmas and to decide to continue the story? Did the boy show any signs to let Carol know that he was experiencing a "big" dilemma in his life, the dilemma of life and death?

It seemed to me that Carol explored herself with the "If." "If she did that, the boy would not have done this."

As Carol reflected on her story with the boy, she found that she had done her best to help the boy cope with the dilemmas in his life. There was no concern about the "If" because Carol tried her best in her relationship with the boy. If Carol realized that she did her best to help the boy, why was his story still a dilemma for her? Every time she thought about his story, it bothered her. "Even yesterday when the sun was shining, but the funeral was happening. It still seemed dull" (**Conversation; March 4, 1992, p. 11**).

As I reflected on myself and Carol, I tried to figure out the reasons death became a "big" dilemma for us as human beings to learn to manage. Why was it hard for us to accept death, especially death of the young ones? And if death happened suddenly and unexpectedly, why was it harder to manage? Was it because we, as human beings, took our lives for granted? We all know that everyone of us has to die one day. Why don't we try to prepare ourselves for an unexpected situation that might come into our lives?

This reminded me of my trip to the Muttart Conservatory with an elder two days ago. We went there to see the Orchid show. What made my trip interesting was not only the orchids themselves but the lady with whom I went. I had not realized how much fun I had with her as we walked around the Muttart Conservatory. She looked at each plant with curiosity as if every plant was new to her and she never been there before. Once when she wanted to know whether the orchids had perfume or not, we knelt down to smell the flowers. I felt as if she opened the door of a new world for me, the world of curiosity. She mentioned that one of her friends had asked her to buy an orchid. I tried to find one for her, a small one. When she saw it, she said that it was too small and her friend might not see its flowers at all. It would be too long until the flowers bloomed.

Her friend might run out of time by then. She wanted the one with the buds on it so her friend could see its flowers and every stage of the plant, every stage of life.

As I listened to her, I began to realize the way she lived her life. As people got older, they do not take life for granted because they feel their stories could end any time. But the young always take life for granted. We feel we still have a lot of time left to do things. However, in reality, life and death do not go that way. The natural phenomenon of death happens not only to the old but also to the young. This elder was right because each of us might run out of time any day. Each day was a gift in itself. Why don't we try to enjoy our days because tomorrow might not come for both the old and the young? In her poem "My Own Day," Little (1986) described my feelings well. She wrote,

> When I opened my eyes this morning,
> The day belonged to me.
> The sky was mine and the sun,
> And my feet got up dancing.
> The marmalade was mine and the squares of sidewalk
> And all the birds in the trees.
> So I stood and I considered
> Stopping the world right there,
> Making today go on and on forever.
> But I decided not to.
> I let the world spin on and I went to school.
> I almost did it, but then, I said to myself,
> "Who knows what you might be missing tomorrow?" (p.
> 79)

In managing her dilemma of the death of the boy she loved and cared for, Carol tried different ways. One of them was sharing his story with me by reflecting on her relationship with him. She tried to find why she felt down by relating the boy's story to her grandmother's story. Because the boy's death was sudden, Carol felt that she did not prepare herself for the event. At the same time she helped the boy's closest friend cope with his feeling of loss. With her kindergarten children, Carol and the children wrote a prayer for the boy. Could Carol solve her dilemma of the death of the boy?

In this situation, Carol did not solve her dilemma at all. Instead, she tried to submerge her dilemma by using different ways to manage her feelings. Carol tried to accept the reality that the boy was gone forever. He would never come back to see her again in the afternoon. For Carol, his death was "the biggest parting, the biggest good-bye" (**Conversation; March 4, 1992, p. 10**).

As I thought of death, it seemed to me that death was so connected to my life that it was hard for me to solve or even to manage. Whenever I experienced the death of a person I loved, it took me a long time to get over it. I could not solve my dilemma of death. Even though I learned that we all have to die some day, it was still hard for me to accept the death of the people I knew. I had to think over and over about their stories and then try to connect them to my story. Time was important in helping me manage my feeling. It might be the same with Carol. About a week after the death of the boy, I noticed that Carol was tired and down (**Fieldnotes; March 11, 1992**). Like me, she used her inner time to cope with her feeling of loss.

The first day after spring break Carol heard more bad news. A boy in grade eight had committed suicide. When Carol heard the news, she was totally shocked. "We have a hard week again, Nophanet. Another boy in grade eight committed suicide" (**Fieldnotes; April 8, 1992**). How could this happen again? Who was the boy? Did she know him? Was he the boy she worked with in the afternoon? After hearing the news, Carol went to the junior high school to find out who the boy was. She wanted to make sure he was not the boy she knew. When she found out he was not a boy she worked with in the afternoon, Carol felt a little bit better. "Thanks heaven, he is not the boy I knew" (**Fieldnotes; April 8, 1992**).

In managing her dilemma this time, Carol did not mention much about the boy. One of the reasons was she did not know the boy. Another reason was the school changed their strategy to deal with the dilemma. All the school staff agreed they would not talk about death as much. They would deal with it quietly because they were afraid that other children would copy the suicide. In their teaching, I noticed that both Carol and her assistant seemed to be tired. Again, they used their inner time to deal with their dilemma of the uncertainty that came to their lives.

The dilemma of the uncertainty of life that happened in Carol's teaching confirmed that teaching is a part of life. Teaching reflected life. It also showed that most dilemmas are unexpected and unsolvable. Certainly, the cause of the dilemmas were not external. They were in the dilemmas themselves. They were subjective depending upon the people who identified them as their dilemmas. However, in our culture, we were taught that every dilemma needed to be solved and we tried to solve it. We tried to control the conflicts. We all hoped that the dilemmas we already solved would not recur as if we finished the puzzles. And once we solved them, we thought we solved them forever (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). But in the reality of life, dilemmas could not be solved. They could only be managed for a particular time and context because they always reappeared in other forms. When we died, who assumed that we were gone? We might pass away only to reappear in other forms. As a dilemma changed into a new form, some might still see it as their dilemma and would try to deal with it again until it changed into a form with which they were satisfied and could live with, a form they could endure. But some might not see it as a dilemma because it satisfied them and they could live with it. But who said that the new form was not a dilemma or was a dilemma? Was it the person?

Michael's Story: How Did Michael Manage His Teaching Dilemmas?

Like Carol, Michael also brought his past experiences and his philosophy of education to the front door of Mesa school as frames to the ways in which he managed his dilemmas in teaching. In this chapter, I select two dilemmas that Michael experienced in his classroom to illustrate my story, and interpretations of how Michael came to manage his ethical dilemmas.

Life on a "choosing board"

As a little boy, Michael felt he did not have many opportunities for freedom to choose what he wanted to do. Most of the time, his agenda was set by someone else. He felt he had to follow other people's agendas all the time.

As a student, Michael developed his own strategies to manage this dilemma. He did a lot of reading on his own. At one time when he felt that he did not have freedom to make decisions on his own about his learning, Michael decided to stop doing assignments and failed. He left the public school system and went into a private school. Did Michael really fail in the public school system or did the public school system fail to serve his needs as a student?

When Michael became a kindergarten teacher in a public school system, he brought his past experiences as a student with him and expressed them in his philosophy. He was aware of something lacking in the public educational system and he tried to build it in his philosophy. Like Carol, Michael had a strong philosophy of teaching. As a teacher, he believed that children should take ownership in their learning. They should have freedom to choose what they wanted to do. They should be independent in their thinking and learning. And most of all, they should be able to see alternatives in their lives.

This reminded me of a storybook The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle (1990). In the story, thirteen-year-old Charlotte Doyle faced many dilemmas while she travelled alone by ship from England to her home in the United States. She was the only woman and a passenger on the ship. A captain had authority over her. She had to learn to make many decisions on her own, something she had not done. At home and in school, she had been trained to be a "lady" and that was her only destiny in life. She was supposed to be what women were expected to be in 1832. When she realized she had to travel alone, she said to herself,

> What could I do? All my life I had been trained to obey, educated to accept. I could hardly change in a moment. (p. 17)

I supposed life was less complicated in 1832 than our twentieth-century lives. However, as it turned out, Charlotte had to make many decisions on her own. Our lives in the twentieth-century are much different in that they are changing, no longer stable and clear. It seems no longer possible to maintain orderly lives. We have to make many decisions in our lives. And if we imagine ourselves to be in our children's shoes, we realize our children might need to make more decisions than we did at their ages. As Michael reflected on the discontinuity of our lives and societies, he was aware of how important it was for him to give his children opportunities to make their own decisions. Michael did not want his children to feel as Charlotte did in the story when she realized she had to be by herself. He realized that his students had to face a lot of societal problems and they had to make many decisions within their lives. What should they do if their friends offered them cigarettes or drugs or alcohol? How could we as teachers help them to decide what they should do, to help them see alternatives in their lives?

As a teacher, Michael thought the solution was not to tell children what they were supposed to do when they faced the dilemmas in their lives but was to help them make thoughtful decisions about what they should do. He felt that if we wanted our children to make "good" decisions in their lives, we needed to give them opportunities to make decisions on their own so that children could see the results of their decisions. In the future, they could learn to imagine what the results of their decisions would be. As a teacher, Michael trusted his children. He believed that children by their nature saw themselves as competent in their learning and capable of making decisions on their own. "I think the children would naturally grow if we gave them a lot of things, they would naturally grow on their own" (**Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 26**). But what about society's school systems? Are they ready to prepare children to face society's problems? Have they done their jobs of preparing children to face the discontinuities of their lives? Did they trust children enough to let them make their own decisions?

From his past experiences as a student and a teacher, Michael realized that as the children walked through the school systems and began life outside of school, there were going to be many decisions made for them along the way. He was aware it was also important for children to learn to follow instructions because most of the time decisions were already made for them. School systems did not enable our children to be independent in their learning, to make decisions on their own. They did not allow children to see alternatives in their lives. Instead, to be successful in our schools and society, children needed to learn not only to make "good" decisions but also to follow instructions. As Michael reflected on his past experiences and his professional life, he realized he was facing a dilemma. His philosophy of what he thought was important for the children was contrary to what the school systems demanded. As a teacher, what should Michael do to manage his dilemma? How should he let his students learn to make decisions at the same time as they learned to follow instructions?

As Michael reflected on his philosophy and the reality of school and society, he tried to manage his dilemma. In his teaching, Michael tried to set a balance between letting the children make their own decisions and teaching them to follow instructions. However, as Michael tried to manage this particular dilemma in a way he could live with, a new dilemma emerged. As Michael tried to give his children the opportunities to make their own decisions, he found himself experiencing a dilemma within a dilemma.

Michael created a "choosing board" for his children so they could see the results of their decisions. He hoped that this would help them understand that in the future when they had to make decisions about what they should do with their lives, they could imagine their results and then make better decisions. As the children moved into different areas in the classroom, they had to move their name cards along on the choosing board. In this way the children would be aware of the decisions they made for themselves. Michael realized that he did not want to use the choosing board in order to keep track of what the children were doing during the day as most of the kindergarten teachers did.

This reminded me of one of my teaching stories. I also had a "choosing board" but I did not develop my own purpose for it. I had it in my classroom because I had seen many teachers in my school using it. They used it in a different way from Michael. Like most kindergarten teachers in my school, I used the choosing board to keep track of the children's activities. I wanted to check on how many activities each student did in a day. I had not thought of using the choosing board to help my students be aware of themselves in their learning. It was interesting to see how Michael used it in his classroom. I wondered about how he managed evaluation in his classroom. How did he manage with other voices outside of himself, that is, the voices of the school board, the curriculum, the parents, the principals, and his colleagues? What did Michael show to the parents and to the first grade teacher about the development of his children?

As I reflected on his story, I found that Michael, like me, was not free from the authority imposed on him. As he tried to give his children opportunities to see their decisions on the choosing board and to enable them to make decisions on their own, he had to learn to follow instructions himself. He struggled to try to live within the system. Did the stakeholders in the curriculum allow Michael to be himself, to do what he wanted to do? Was his life also on the educational choosing board?

As a teacher, I deeply understood how hard it was to try to live within the system. I sometimes felt it was difficult to breathe because there were many demands and expectations on me. Sometimes I wondered if my life was also on the educational choosing board. Like Michael and his children, I had choices in my teaching but they were within a limited space. I remembered trying to please all the voices of the stakeholders. I forgot to listen to my voice and to my children's voices. Many times I tried to silence my voice so I could get along within the system more smoothly. As I thought of Michael, I felt his experience might be like mine. It might also be hard for him to live within the system. He might suppress his voice as well. Even though Michael did not use the choosing board to keep track of what his children were doing, Michael still had to deal with evaluation in his classroom. There were specific projects Michael had to keep a record of for the parents and for the first grade teacher. One example was the project on tracing the bodies of the children. A child had to lie down on a big piece of paper. Then Michael or Laura, the teacher assistant, would trace a line around the child's body. After that the child would paint and decorate his/her own body. What should Michael do? How could he follow other people's agendas at the same time that he allowed his children to have their own agendas? How could he keep track of children's activities at the same time as he gave them freedom to choose, to enable them to make their own decisions?

In managing this dilemma, Michael reflected on his philosophy and on his professional life. As he tried to manage this dilemma with his students, he was also dealing with another expression of the dilemma in his professional life. Michael mentioned several times his dilemma with the school board. For the next year, the board wanted all kindergarten children to come to school on the first day of entry. They did not want to tell parents that their children could not come to school when school began. "They said they don't want to exclude the children from school. They don't want to tell parents that their children can't come to school when the school starts" (**Conversation; February 7, 1992, p. 5**). Usually Michael and other kindergarten teachers divided the children into three small groups and had each group come to school alone for a day. After that all the children came altogether. "The other thing is three small groups. So, eight children each day and then all of them come altogether" (**Conversation; February 7, 1992, p. 5**).

As a kindergarten teacher, I understood Michael's reason for dividing the children into three small groups. In my kindergarten, we also divided the children into small groups even though we arranged them differently than Michael did. In the first week of school only one group of the children came. In the second week the first and second group came. On the third week all the children came together. It took three weeks for all the children to come together. Our rationale, was to allow time to prepare each group of children and to help them get used to the school routines and environment. Young children who had not attended nursery school or play-school, needed more attention from the teachers. Some of them did not want to leave their parents and they cried.

One little girl cried for a month when she came to my kindergarten. Even though she had attended a nursery school, she was still lonely and needed time to adapt to a new environment. The girl always asked me or a helper to hold her or to stay with her. Whenever she cried, other children began to cry. In this situation it would have been more difficult to take care of all the children at the same time. In the same way, children who did not cry began to get frustrated because they wanted to learn the routines of the school. As a teacher, I felt it was very important to divide the children into small groups because if some children cried, I could ask the helper to stay with them while I introduced other children to the class routines. I also had more opportunity to get to know them individually. I thought this might also be Michael's reasons. However, Michael wanted only three days to prepare the children for the rest of the year.

He was frustrated about the way the school board made decisions that related to the teachers, the children, and the parents. Michael was not concerned about the decision they had made. He was more interested in the process of how they made decisions. Because the decision would affect kindergarten teachers, parents and children, Michael thought that it would be fair if the school board listened to what teachers and parents thought about the issue. "If they think we're professionals so maybe they should be listening to our opinions---as professionals. That's what I think. I think they've been wrong, not necessarily in the decision but I think in the way that they make decisions. I think it was wrong not to include people most affected by it" (**Conversation; February 7, 1992, p. 6**).

What was most important about Michael was he saw alternatives in his profession. Michael did not take a hierarchy of authority for granted. He got together with other teachers in his area in order to discuss what other teachers thought about it. He and his colleagues then wrote a letter to the school board to voice their opinions. "Well, we wrote a letter. We got together and there were more than fifty of us that put our names on this letter" (**Conversation; February 7, 1992, p. 5**). In the letter, the teachers told the school board what they thought they should do before making decisions. This also reflected Michael's educational philosophy and his practice of teaching.

> So, when I wrote a letter to the board, I said to them if I was going to make a decision about renovating the building, I would want to talk to people who are going to use the building. I would want to talk to professionals in construction and ask their opinions before I started deciding what I was going to build and how. And so I said in this kind of decision, I would expect the same sort of thing. I would expect them to consult with the people who are researchers in the field, university professors, and researchers and people who are child specialists and work with children, child psychologist, pediatricians and child psychiatrists and I would expect to consult with the people who are closest to the action---the parents, the children, and the professional, the teachers who are working directly

> with it. So, I'm hoping that they are going to look at that. **(Conversation; February 7, 1992, p. 4)**

Michael seemed to be a strong and open-minded person. He always listened to other people's opinions that were different from his and took them into consideration. When decisions were made in a way that Michael did not agree with, Michael decided he would accept them because as a teacher, he realized he did not have a lot of choices. "Hopefully we don't have to do it but if we have to, we have no choice" **(Conversation; February 7, 1992, p. 4)**.

Finally, the board did listen to the parents and gave the choice to parents to make decisions about whether they wanted to have three days of entry or only one.

> They---um---the board decided, I think, the board decided that next year the kindergartens could decide with their parents whether they wanted to have staggered entry and if they want to they can take three days---the first three days of school to have children coming in small groups. So, that means they listened to the parents. I knew they would. I was pretty sure they were. (laugh) **(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 9)**

However, the school board did not listen to the teachers. According to Michael, they were not interested in what the teachers thought and that bothered him a lot. "I don't like the way that they made this decision and I don't like the decision itself. If they have our input and they listen to our ideas and what we think and then they listen to parents and then they say, 'Well, we've decided we'll do it this way anyhow,' then I can go along with it because at least they've thought about it. But when they just come in and say, 'This is the way it's going to be and not ask for our input then that bothers me" **(Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 11)**.

Greene (1978a) in Landscapes of Learning draws attention to classroom teachers in a hierarchy of authority. In the hierarchy, classroom teachers are assigned a low place in sharing their voices. Most of the decisions made in schools do not come from the classroom teachers even though the issues concern them and their children. They emanate from the "office" and most teachers learn to follow them without seeing alternatives. They might not agree with the decisions but the hierarchy does not allow them to voice their opinions.

Like most classroom teachers, I was in the same situation. There were some school regulations I did not agree with but I was afraid to question. I could feel the hierarchy of authority in my school. I ended up talking to myself, "I don't want to get into trouble. If I voice my opinions, I might be in a 'big' trouble." I tried to ignore the issues, to pretend not to see or hear them so I could get through my days. I let the hierarchy silence me and I also silenced myself. I might be like one of the daughters in Tan's story The Joy Luck Club (1989) who always said as her mother described,

> She cried, "No choice! No choice!" She doesn't know. If she doesn't speak, she is making a choice. If she doesn't try, she can lose her chance forever. (p. 241)

As I looked back at my teaching, I began to realize that the hierarchy of the authority that presented itself to me was an interpreted one. The way I learned to understand it made it a reality for me. I saw no alternatives. I took my reality for granted and was afraid to question it. I began to silence myself.

What was significant here was not whether Michael and his colleagues succeeded in the issue. What was more important was that they explored their professional alternatives. They were aware of their freedom to let their voices to be heard (Greene, 1988). They realized they had a right to speak for themselves in order to make differences in their situations. They got together, had discussion among themselves about what they should do, and took action. They saw themselves as professionals who were "awake" in their teaching.

In dealing with his dilemma with the children, Michael used a similar pattern to the one he suggested to the school board. He might have a conversation within himself. Who had to do the school assignment? Who would be most affected in doing the school assignment? Was it the children, the parents, the first grade teachers or himself? If the children were most affected by it, how silenced would the children be if they had no voice in the decision? How could the children let their "small" voices be heard if adults did not give them opportunities to speak for themselves and to listen to what they told us?

In managing the dilemma, Michael acted like a school board and the children as teachers. What was different in the story was Michael listened to what the children said. He could see himself in the children. He put himself in the children's shoes in trying to manage his teaching dilemma. He was concerned about what they were thinking. Most of all, he wanted to let the children know that there were alternatives in their lives.

As Michael reflected on himself and the children, he gave his children opportunities to make their decisions, their own choices because he respected them. As I figured out his story, it appeared to me that Michael was also aware that it was necessary for parents and teachers to have records of some of the children's work. At the same time, Michael wanted to hear the voices of his children. He knew that he needed to listen to their voices because they were the people most affected by this decision. Therefore, Michael gave the children opportunities to pick the day they wanted to do a specific project. What if the children did not want to do the project? Did they have a choice not to do it? If they did not want to do it, did that fit with his agenda?

I have not talked to Michael about these questions. I could, however, imagine what Michael would do if the children did not want to do the project. He would allow his children not to do the project. He would ask them to think about a project they wanted to do. He would explain to them how necessary it was for the first grade teachers and the parents to have records of their work and then allow them to make their own decisions.

The story in Michael's classroom reflected the hierarchy of authority in our society, our lives on a choosing board. It also reflected Michael's life. As a person, Michael lived a life of reflectiveness and care, a life of wide-awakeness (Greene, 1978a). In his practice, Michael cared for his students and tried to give them opportunities to make decisions on their own as much as he could. He tried to help them attain some kind of clarity about how to choose, how to decide what to do and the abilities to imagine the results of their decisions. He tried to prepare them to make "good" decisions in their lives. As a person, Michael always realized it was always the individual who had the responsibility for his/her own choosing. At the same time he was aware of the reality of our society and tried to help his students make a balance in their lives between self-directed and society-directed. As he tried to help his students, Michael himself struggled with finding ways to make his own decisions, to make a balance between the self-directed and the society-directed. He was still in search of his own freedom and at the same time he tried to arouse his children to go in search of their own. The way Michael managed his dilemma in teaching reflected the way he tried to manage his professional dilemma.

As I reflected more on Michael's story, I felt that we all have conditions in our lives. Our lives were set up by one another. Our lives might be on a "choosing board" all the time because most of us have our own choices, our own freedom in a limited space. Even though Michael used the choosing board as a way to give his children opportunities to make their own decisions, to see the results of their decisions, he authored their lives at the same time. It seemed to me that each of us could not be totally free at the same time. If we all were free, we would again begin to control each other. To me, authority and freedom were connected like life and death (Gowin in Greene, 1988). If we had one, we needed to have the other. Therefore, I was not asking for "equality" in the classroom or in the world. I wondered whether equality existed in the world. It seemed to me only the language existed but the action did not. To me, there was no point in asking for equality, something that did not exist. But the point is how can we, as teachers, use our authority in a proper way in order to create positive freedom for our children? From Michael's story we know that he tried to give his authority back to the children. As he tried to give voice to them, he also maintained his voice. For his voice to be heard, he listened to his children. By listening to the children, Michael listened to himself. He maintained his authority as he listened to his children. It seemed to me that the price of being heard, of having authority, was the willingness to listen to other people, to create positive freedom in them.

The experience of time in the reality of teaching

Michael believed that very young children by their own nature saw themselves as competent and powerful. They believed they could do things they wanted to do.

Very young children, as I knew them, lived for the present, not for the past or the future. They were running from place to place in order to experience things they had not experienced. Unlike grownups, young children did not "run to catch hold of something" (Lusseyran, 1987, p. 7). They ran only to get to know things they wanted to know, to enjoy what the day offered them. I remembered when my brother was in kindergarten that he walked home from school with his two friends. It took them about a half day to get home because they stopped many places to enjoy the world. My parents were worried about my brother because they were afraid that he was kidnapped. When he came home, he was punished. I wondered what he thought during that time because his world and our parents' world were so different. As a little girl, I had not thought somebody would kidnap us because it did not make sense to me. At that time I did not understand why my parents were concerned.

As a teacher of young children, I learned to know that our worlds, children's world and adults' world, were as different as black and white. My students did not live in a world of fear like me, their teacher. They were willing to try something new and could accept everything that came into their lives more easily and better than adults. They looked at the world with wonder and curiosity. In When We Were Very Young, Milne (1924) described a difference between young children and grownups. Grownups love to have purpose in their lives. They plan what they want to do for the day. Grownups love to think about the future more than the present. Young children love to enjoy moment by moment. When adults ask very young children about the purpose of climbing a hill, it made no sense. He wrote,

> Where am I going? I don't know.
> Down to the stream where the king-cups grow-
> Up on the hill where the pine trees blow-
> Anywhere, anywhere. I don't know.
>
> Where am I going? The clouds sail by,
> Little ones, baby ones, over the sky.
> Where am I going? The shadows pass,
> Little ones, baby ones, over the grass.
>
> If you were a cloud, and sailed up there,
> You'd sail on water as blue as air,
> And you'd see me here in the fields and say:
> "Doesn't the sky look green today?"
>
> Where am I going? The high rocks call:
> "It's awful fun to be born at all."
> Where am I going? The ring-doves coo:
> "We do have beautiful things to do."
>
> If you were a bird, and lived on high,
> You'd lean on the wind when the wind came by,
> You'd say to the wind when it took you away:
> "That's where I wanted to go today!"
>
> Where am I going? I don't quite know.
> What does it matter where people go?
> Down to the wood where the blue-bells grow-
> Anywhere, anywhere. I don't know. (p. 35)

From his experiences as a boy, Michael felt that as children grew up, the ways they looked at themselves were slowly changing depending upon how they experienced society around them. Usually society told them they were not as competent as they thought they were. "But they (the children) still have it driven into them "I can't read. I can't write" (**Conversation; April 13, 1992, p. 23**). In the poem "The Friend," Milne (1925) reflected on how Christopher, a six-year-old boy, tried to fit himself into the adults' world as he was struggling to learn "Dates and Pounds-and ounces and the names of funny Kings."

> There are lots and lots of people who are always asking things,
>
> Like Dates and Pounds-and-ounces and the names of funny Kings,
>
> And the answer's either Sixpence or A Hundred Inches Long,
>
> And I know they'll think me silly if I get the answer wrong. (Now We are Six, p. 65)

When Michael became a kindergarten teacher, he found that children in his class often experienced the world in ways that made them confused and frustrated. More than half the children in his classroom stayed with either their fathers or mothers. As parents got divorced, some children suffered because they did not understand why their moms or dads left home. They missed one of them a lot and were in pain when they found out they had no control over their parents' lives or even their own lives. The children might feel shock before they could begin to accept the reality of their lives. They might question whether their situations were "real." They might want to know whether it was possible for their parents to live together again. Bateson (1984) described her feeling very well when she found out her parents were getting divorced. She wrote,

> What I remember is asking again and again to be reassured that they (her parents) were not angry with each other, and asking whether it was possible for people who were

> divorced to marry each other again. And I remember walking through the redwoods with them after a while, and hearing a radio playing, a rare sound in the forest in those days, feeling that the park my parents took me to together was not the real forest, not the kind of forest where Daddy and I used to go. (p. 55)

Some children could not adapt themselves well to the changes in their lives and so they ended up getting upset with themselves, their parents, and the world around them. They were confused and did not know what to do. Some did not have words to describe their feelings. They could feel the situations they were in from their whole beings. In And There was Light, Lusseyran (1987) described how young children perceived the world when he wrote,

> I am certain that children always know more than they are able to tell, and that makes the big difference between them and adults, who, at best, know only a fraction of what they say. The reason is simply that children know everything with their whole beings, while we know it only with our heads. When a child is threatened by sickness or trouble, he know it right away, stops his games and takes refuge with his mother. (p. 12)

Some of the children in Michael's classroom tried to express their frustration and anger through their actions. They could not describe what was wrong in words and became more frustrated. They were upset with the world around them and began to develop emotional problems. Some of them got angry easily and had trouble dealing with their anger. They did not want to join their classroom's activities. Some of them ended up swearing at other children and their teacher. As a classroom teacher, how did Michael manage with these problems? How did he help the children cope with their frustrations?

Michael felt he had a responsibility to give the power back to the children, to help them see themselves as powerful and as competent. When Michael and the children discussed the family theme during group time, he tried to make them realize there were different kinds of families. Family did not mean one type, mother, father, and children. Family meant somebody who took care of the children, somebody with whom the children felt connected. It might be their uncles or grandmothers or grandfathers. Michael was consciously aware of the realities of his children's lives. He tried to help them realize the realities of their lives as well.

This reminded me of a story of a girl whose mother passed away when the girl was a baby. The girl lived with her grandmother and father. In Thailand, we have mother's day and children are supposed to make cards and jasmines for their mothers. When a teacher asked her class to make a card, the girl told her teacher that she did not want to do it because she did not have a mother. The teacher asked her about her grandmother and told her that she could give a card to her grandmother instead. As I listened to this story told by my friend, the girl's teacher, I felt sympathy with the little girl. At the same time I began to be aware of the changing family structures in our societies and how important it was for teachers to help our students be aware of this reality.

Michael found that most of his students expressed themselves through play, through the stories they dictated, and through their drawings. Some of the children told the same stories over and over in order to overcome their feelings of frustration. As Michael worked with his children, he realized the need to deal with each child individually. He was aware of how important it was for him to talk to each child one on one, to help him/her identify his/her feelings. Michael saw himself as a person who encouraged the children to reflect on their stories by giving feedback to them. He tried to act as their playback to help them express and identify their feelings through language. "Using play, the things they've working out in their play, is therapy, is helping them (the children) to see---I guess---giving them validation for their feelings and helping them to recognize what their feelings are. Some children don't recognize what their feelings are just like adults" (**Conversation; April 21, 1992, p. 7-8**).

Paley (1988) in Bad Guys Don't Have Birthdays wrote about how important it was for teachers to act as the children's playback. The children, as Paley stated, wanted to hear their own stories again so that they could explain and expand their ideas upon a second hearing. She wrote,

> My intention, when I began this pattern of repeating what the children say, may have been to secure a more accurate tape, but I soon realized how much the children wanted to hear their own and their classmates' lines again. All the children could better explain and expand an idea upon a second hearing. In effect, I was their playback, and they studied our dialogues-in-the-making as I would later review them on tape. (p. 26-27)

However, Michael was frustrated when he realized that he did not have enough time to work with the children individually. "But the hard part is I don't have time to do the therapy in here to help them work through. They have to be self-directed and a lot of that I can spend a little bit time with them but with twenty-four children I spend five minutes with each of them and all of a sudden it's over" (Conversation, March 2, 1992, p. 13). What should Michael do? How did Michael help his students manage their life dilemmas? At the same time how did he himself manage his dilemma with time in his classroom? I wondered how Michael came to understand time in his life.

As I reflected on Michael's story, I realized Michael was a busy person who handled many things at the same time. He was a school counselor, a kindergarten teacher, and a part time graduate student. In the summer, Michael co-taught a class at the university. Michael worked very hard to manage everything in his life. He tried to keep everything in control. As I looked at Michael's teaching, I was not surprised he was sick for a while. There were a couple of times that Michael mentioned he felt exhausted. Sometimes he had to come to school very early to finish his work of counselling. Michael used morning time to arrange the classroom and to prepare activities for the children because in the afternoon he was the counsellor. One day, he told me he was tired because he stayed up all night to finish a university assignment (**Fieldnotes; April 27, 1992**).

I was not surprised Michael saw time as a valuable commodity. "Just a minute with each of them (the children) is half an hour time already. Two minutes with each of them is an hour. So, it makes it difficult" (**Conversation, March 2, 1992, p. 13**). Time became a limited resource that Michael used to accomplish his goals , his university work, classroom work, and counselling work (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). To him, time was linear. Each hour had sixty minutes, each day had twenty-four hours, each week had seven days, each month had about four weeks, each year had twelve months. How could Michael manage all of his activities in the limited time he had?

As I thought of how Michael managed time in his life, I began to ask myself what time was. Was time an object we could touch and spend in whatever way we wanted? I realized time was very difficult to understand because, unlike an object, I could not smell, taste, hear, touch, or see it (Polkinghorne, 1988). Time was up in the air but there were many times that I treated time as if it was a thing. Time was also very close to us. It was so close that we lived in it as fish lived in water. When something is very close, it could be very far at the same time. Troutner (1974), in "Time and Education," stated "man is time" (p. 159). He believed that nothing is closer to us than time. It reminded me of my dad who once mentioned "self" when I talked about time. To him, self, by its nature, did not exist. If self existed, it was because of time and space. It seemed to me there was no "reality" in life. There might be only the "reality" that we created for ourselves, not an absolute reality. I thought about my "reality" and my father's "reality" and about how different our realities were. Why were our realities different? As I reflected on it, I could see how time and space affected the ways in which we each created "reality." My "reality" was different from his "reality" because our past experiences were different; our time and space were not the same. My dad mentioned that his "reality" at seventeen was different from his "reality" at sixty-one because time and space played important roles in shaping and re-shaping his life. I had a feeling that my father saw his life as a work in progress, not a finished one. It might be the same with Carol, Michael and me. The three of us were aware that our lives were not yet finished. They were still in process as we walked through time and space. We constructed and re-constructed our lives all the time. We changed little by little as we gained more experiences.

As I looked through my Thai eyes, the metaphor of time as a stream of water came to mind. In Thai culture, time was like a stream of water because when it had gone, it would never come back. We do not step in the same time twice. Time was irreversible. As I became older, I could not become younger (Schutz, 1973). When I looked at time from this perspective, it seemed to me that time had its own life. It had its own freedom. It existed independently from human awareness. I realized that I would die one day and time would still go on. The world would continue without me. As a human being, it seemed to me we had no control over time. We tried to tie our life activities to time. This reminded me of our "Thai year." As I am writing this chapter, the year in North America is 1993. If I were to write this chapter in Thailand, it would be in the year of 2536 because we count our years from when the Buddha passed away. It is very interesting to see how we condition our lives to time and how we measure and locate the length of time by using clocks and chronological instruments. We treat time as if it is an object, a line that had no life of its own. Is time really a line? Or is it a circle in which the beginning and the end are the same?

In Thai culture, time is considered as a precious thing. We use the metaphor of water to talk about time because as an agricultural country, water is important to our lives. We have a metaphor of the rise and fall of the tide to indicate how we value time. In ancient times, most of Thai people lived on the banks of the rivers and water was very important to the people's lives. In the metaphor "Num Kun Hai Reeb Tuk," the words

Num Kun meant the rise of the tide and the words Hai Reeb Tuk meant to fetch hurriedly. The metaphor "Num Kun Hai Reeb Tuk" meant when the water was up, we needed to fetch the water as soon as we could because when the water was down, we had to wait for a long time to fetch the water again. It might not be the same water as we had fetched before. Time was like the the rise and fall of the tide. My mother told me there was always the "right" time to do the "right" things. What did my mom mean by the "right" time? How did I know when it was the "right" time to do the "exact" thing? Could a clock tell me the "right" time? What was the "right" time then?

As I thought more about time, I began to realize that the rise and fall of the tide was independent from the clock time. Water had developed its own time separate from world time. Water did not need the clock to tell it when it should be up and down. It directed itself. It developed its own rhythm, its own life. Another example that I could think of was a pregnant woman. How did a body know when was the right time to deliver a child? It seemed to me that the body could feel the right time to give birth to a child. As human beings, we might have our own biological time, the time in which our bodies felt it was the "right" time to do things or to take a rest. As I reflected on Michael's story, I became aware that before he was sick, he was very tired and he mentioned how tired he was to me a couple times. When he got sick, his body might have been telling him it was time for him to take a rest, to take a break from his activities so he could start fresh again. I thought our bodies might develop its own time, independent from the clock time. It might be like a rhythm of life. In life, we all developed our own rhythm, our own time to do things. What about young children? How did they live time? Did they develop their own time independent from the clock time?

The more I listened to young children, the more I realized that young children were more independent from world time than adults. Very young children hardly tied their lives to clock time. They had more freedom than grownups. I could see myself as a little girl playing and running outside all day long without realizing how much the time passed until a teacher called me in. As a little girl, I was not worried about the year, the date, or the time. I tended to lose myself to the things I experienced in the world. I began to give myself away to things we had created for ourselves. I began to perceive clock time as standard time and accepted it as my only reality. The clock began to control and organize my life. I allowed it to control my body as well. I got up, ate, worked, played and went to bed by the clock time. There were many times that I measured the quality of my university papers by how long I spent on them. Little by little I lost my own time to the clock time and forgot what my own time was. As I reflected on myself, I noticed that I loved to say something like, "I'm wasting my time." or "If I got sick, I would lose a lot of time." More and more I began to measure time by using the clock and forgot that the clock time was also created. If young children developed their own time to do their own things independent from the world time, what about our educational systems? How were our school systems set up? Were they set up based on the clock time or the inner and biological time of the children?

Schools, as we all knew, were governed by clock time. Everything in schools needed to be specific. Classes started and ended at exact times. If a child was late for the class, he had to go to the office to get an excuse. Recess was set up at the specific time and it had to be between certain minutes. If a child did not come in from recess at the exact time, he might be punished. This happened in Michael's school. Like children in other schools, the kindergarten children in Michael's school had to learn to conform to the clock time, not their own time. As a classroom teacher, Michael had a responsibility to teach his children to learn to conform to the clock time. When he found out that some of his children had problems coming in in the morning and after recess, he tried to teach them to realize how important clock time was to them if they wanted to be a part of the society.

> Tom and Kent---um---at the start of the year they had problems coming in when the bell rang and after recess. And then what I would do is---um---I was---because I was out there with them. I would practice getting them to line up when the bell rang. And then later on I'd keep them in for five minutes so if they were five minutes late then they had to go out five minutes late the next time. **(Conversation; March 2, 1992, p. 12)**

If education was supposed to act as the transmission of the culture, schools did their jobs very well on clock time. Mesa School tried to teach its children about how important the world time was in their lives. They tried to tie their children's school lives into the clock time. They initiated a school discipline plan so that their children would become more aware of the world time. One of Michael's children was tied into this program when he came in late. As a classroom teacher, Michael felt that it was his responsibility to remind the child about what he should do when the bell rang.

> And now what happened was that they were out there at recess time and the teacher called them to come in, the bell rang. They didn't come. The teacher called them and they ignored the teacher and went and hid. And they---we use a Mesa School Discipline Plan then. If they have problems at recess time, then they stay inside at room seven. And so, they're already tied into that. So, because of that Kent---Kent was inside for two recesses and he's done so he's finished today. And now hopefully when he goes out for recess, he'll remember to come in when the bell rings. I'll ask him tomorrow when he goes out, "What are you going to do when the bell rings?" **(Conversation; Interview, March 2, 1992, p. 12)**

As I was writing, I had a feeling that it was difficult to talk about time because as I wrote, I tried to develop my own time but at the same time I was aware of the clock time. If there were two different types of time which one was the clock time or the world time and which was the inner and biological time? What metaphor do we want to live?

However, to manage this dilemma, it might not be necessary for us to make a choice between the two worlds, the world of black and white or night and day. Our world might be a kind of mixing between the two. We could create a new world, the world of grey.

As a classroom teacher, Michael tried to create a new world of time. He was aware that we created clock time so we could change it if it did not fit with our activities. He tried to make time flexible for the children. He realized how important it was for his children to have continuing time of their own. At one time, when he found out that the children still engaged in their activities at the centers but they had to go outside for school recess, Michael tried to make time more flexible for the children. But at the same time Michael realized that to be successful in our society, children needed to learn to manage their clock time as well. Therefore, in his teaching, he tried to help his students be aware of world time and how they managed world time in their lives. At the beginning of my visits, Michael planned to teach the children about the concept of time. He told me that the children needed to learn about what they did at different times of the day **(Fieldnotes; January 15, 1992)**. It seemed to me that in Michael's classroom, work was associated with the time it took and time was quantified. Michael always mentioned clock time. He reminded them to notice the minute hand of the clock when they had to clean up. In one of my fieldnotes entries, I recorded,

> Michael sang a "Clean-up" song. Therefore, the children began to clean up. Michael said, "I'm going to set time for five minutes." He set the time for the children to finish clean-up. He said, "Four minutes left." Then he counted backward, "ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one." After the children got together, Michael told them that they were going to have special guests in a music room. **(Fieldnotes; January 22, 1992)**

Some of the children in the classroom began to be aware of how important time was to their lives. They began to tie their life activities to time. At one time Amy, a five-year-old girl, drew a "clock" and told me the time she went to bed and the time she got up (Fieldnotes; February 5, 1992).

How did Michael manage his dilemma of not having enough time to work with his children one on one? How could he find more time to work with them? In managing the dilemma, Michael reflected on his philosophy of optimism. As Michael trusted the children, he trusted himself and other people as well. He valued his own time and abilities in working with the children as well as other people's time and abilities. Michael always realized that it was not necessary that it be him who gave power to the children. It could be any of the adults who were willing to spend time with the children in listening to their stories and working with them in the classroom. Therefore, with the time and help of his teacher assistant, parents, and volunteers who came in to the classroom, Michael managed his dilemma. "Num Kun Hai Reeb Tuk," everything in its time.

Chapter VIII

Death and Rebirth in Narratives

> What the cocoon calls the end of the world, the master calls
> a butterfly. (Unknown)

This study is filled with many stories that emerged from my experiences of working with two teachers, Carol and Michael. When I think about what I learned from this inquiry, I feel like many people in old age who look back on their lives in the hope of glimpsing life as they lived it from childhood to their last years (Coles, 1989). I began to ask myself questions like, "Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going to be?" As I asked myself these questions, a metaphor of death came to mind.

I see life and death as a cycle. To me, birth precedes death, and death, on the other hand, precedes birth. It is like eggs and chickens. We have no way to find out whether eggs come before chickens or chickens come before eggs. Birth and death accompany each other in unbroken succession. Like the waves of the sea, we live and die in every moment of our lives (Buddhism-A living Message). We pass away from one life, one story, in order to be born in another life, another story. The succession of life and death seems unending. It may be like in stories. We finish one story in order to begin a new story. The pathway of this life, this story, lead into the pathway of the next life, the next story. If this final chapter is the final stage of my life, what will I do before I start a new life, a new story?

As I began to look back on my past experiences with Carol and Michael, the issue of "time" came to my mind. Having grown up in a Buddhist family, I was taught to live in the present, not the past. My dad reminded me to be aware of myself, of what I was doing. Whenever I thought about living in the present, I was reminded of a Zen story about two monks who intended to walk across a river. They met a young woman who also wanted to cross the river but she could not. One of the monks decided to help her by holding her and walking across the river. The other monk was shocked to see what happened. In Buddhism, it is wrong for monks to touch women. When they came to the other side of the river, the monk put the woman down and they kept on with their journey. As they were walking together, the other monk kept thinking about the monk who held the woman. "Why did he do that? Did he know that it was wrong?" What was his intention of doing that?" He kept thinking about these questions. Finally he could not stand his thinking anymore so he decided to talk to his friend. When the monk heard what the other monk was saying, he replied, "I put the woman down a long time ago, at the bank of the river but you did not. You are still holding her with you."

As a person I was aware that the way I had been living my life was not altogether a good way. There were many moments that I spent thinking about the past or planning for the future without enjoying the present. For example, when I was teaching, I worried about how my children performed on past exams so I tried to drill them to be ready for the next exam. I forgot to look at the context of the classroom, of where the children were. I had no time to question myself about who I was, what I wanted most for my children, and what I was doing in that particular time because I was always concerned with the future. I felt that it was hard for me to live in the present, to enjoy the now moment of my life. However, I found that as I tried to live in the present, to enjoy the world the way it presented itself to me, I began to be aware of who I was and could feel the timelessness of the world (Oakley, 1992). In the moment I lived in the present, there was no past or future. Everything came together in one moment, past, present and future. It seemed to me that narrative approached my life this way. As I wrote the narrative accounts, I could see the interpenetration of past, present, and future in cycles (Troutner, 1974). In narratives of experience, I retold and relived my past stories in order to understand who I was in the present and to create my purpose in the future. I found that when I began to think of my life and other people's lives as wholes, I could understand my life and their lives more meaningfully. There were many times I felt upset with people but when I began to look at their lives and tried to understand who they were, I felt much better and could let go of the past. It seemed to me that I was attached to the past when I looked at it in parts because it was hard to understand life in parts.

Most of the people who were aware they were in the final stages of their lives struggled with their memories of past lives and began to look at their future lives (McHutchion, 1987). Most of them scrutinized their lives with respect to the ways they had lived their lives. One of my mother's friends, when she was mortally ill, talked a lot about her past lives as a medical student and a doctor. She kept talking as if, in making sense of her past experiences, she could let go of them. She could feel the pain that her patients experienced when they were in their final stages of lives. When one of her friends asked her whether she wanted to become a doctor in her next life, her answer was "No." She did not want to study hard. It seemed to me that in the end of our lives, the end of our stories, there were only stories inside us to contemplate. Our stories contained all the answers of what our lives were (Coles, 1989).

However, in an attempt to finish this final chapter of my story, I still found that sometimes it was hard for me to let go of it, to let go of my journey with Carol and Michael. For people in the final stages of their lives, it was sometimes hard for them to let go of the past. My grandfather when he was mortally ill did not want to die. But when he figured out his past lives, he passed away peacefully. With this research study, I felt like I had been living with it for a long time. It had become a part of me, a part of my life. I had a feeling that it was hard to let go of it, to let go of something that was a part of me. It might be like a mother who did not want to let go of her child when it was time for him/her to start school. I had been living with this story for so long that when it was time to say good-bye, I felt like I was lost. I did not know where to go and what to do. At the same time, I was aware of both my own inner time and world time. I could feel that it was time to finish the story so that I could begin a new story, a new life.

As a young girl, I imagined the end of my life to be as beautiful as I wanted it to be. As I read a description of death in a novel, I pictured myself walking on the beach and letting the sea swallow my body little by little. As a girl, I thought it would be nice to have choices for our death. However, in life, we do not have choices for our own death. Different from life, in stories we have choices for the end of our stories. We can create the endings of our stories to be whatever we want them to be.

As a reader and a writer, I love stories with beautiful endings. It was not necessary to be a happy ending but it should be an ending that gave something to its readers to ponder or to help them question their own stories, their own lives. It could be an ending that asked new questions for readers to think about or offered a new story to tell. For the ending of this research study, I thought it would be nice if the three of us could reflect on our work and think about what we had learned from sharing stories with each other. How did we as teachers learn to live our teaching stories which were full of dilemmas for us to manage?

As a researcher and a writer, I always wanted our three voices to integrate with each other and become one voice. As my writing went on, I found that it was hard to mingle our voices together because each of us was different. We all had our own stories to tell. I worked with both teachers separately. Our stories are always the stories between Michael and me or Carol and me. When I came to think about the final chapter of our stories, I wanted to try to mingle our three voices together in my writing. I phoned Carol and asked her what helped her manage her dilemmas. After our conversations that day, we decided to meet the following day so we could talk in person. However, Carol phoned me back and told me she could not make it because her mother was very sick.

The following week, I phoned Carol and found out that her mother had passed away. As her friend, I felt that it was a "true" death for her. As I reflected on our stories, I found that our stories spoke for themselves about what death and life meant to us as persons. About a week after I talked to Carol, I met Michael and asked him about what helped him manage his dilemmas. As both of them looked back and reflected on their teaching stories and how they made sense of them, I began to reflect on my stories.

Re-visiting the Research Topic

Throughout my experiences as a kindergarten teacher, I always asked myself what teaching was and how could I stay fresh and alive in my teaching. As an experienced teacher, I saw my teaching as boring and wanted to leave it. I decided to pursue my Master's Degree in order to find out what teaching was but I ended up with a lot of theories about teaching and learning without realizing what teaching meant to me. When I met Carol at the Preprimary Program, I began to make connections between her philosophy and her actions in the classroom. I wondered if philosophy was a way for me to answer my question of what teaching was. In summer 1990, I took a class in autobiography with Dr. Richard Butt and began to realize more about myself and my teaching. In an independent study with Dr. Jean Clandinin, I learned to articulate my educational philosophy in my writing and began to see how important it was for me to be aware of my past experiences and my philosophy. I came to think that it would make a lot difference for me if I was aware of my philosophy when I taught. If I knew what I wanted most for my children and myself, I would teach differently. I wondered what it would be like for experienced teachers who were aware of their philosophies. How did they handle their teaching? Because I knew my teaching was full of dilemmas, I wondered how teachers' philosophies helped teachers manage their teaching dilemmas. With all these questions in my mind, I began my study with only two kindergarten teachers, Carol and Michael. I wanted to delve more deeply into our teaching stories.

I began my research journey with some anticipation and much excitement. As I worked with them, my understanding of them and of teaching grew considerably. As they told their teaching stories, I could see myself in their places. Because of my work with them, I came to understand myself and my teaching better. In my relationship with the two teachers, I viewed each of them as a unique human individual. I realized that it was very important for consultants, principals, or university researchers, who really wanted to help teachers, to get to know them and to understand their interests, abilities, and dilemmas. It was like when we tried to encourage student teachers to get to know each child's interests, abilities, and dilemmas so they could plan appropriate activities (Turner, 1984).

When I began to write the research texts of each teacher, I was overwhelmed with hundreds of pages of field texts I had collected. I read through the field texts of each teacher over and over to search for themes, patterns, tensions, and narrative threads (Clandinin & Connelly, 1993). The way in which I reconstructed the research texts was shaped by my own experiences. In each of the teacher's stories, I tried to let the stories speak for themselves as much as I could. I began to write Carol's story first and faced many difficulties in writing research texts. I felt every single page of the field texts was valuable and important and did not want to leave any out. I wanted to let the field texts speak for themselves. However, when I talked to Dr. Jean Clandinin, one of my supervisory committee, she suggested that my task as a researcher was to reconstruct the meaning for the research texts. I talked to Carol to discuss the themes that emerged from our journey together and decided to write her story. I began to write Michael's story with a lot of confidence in myself because I had already gone through the process of reconstructing the research texts from Carol's story. I experienced a lot of joy and fun in writing Michael's story. After finishing the two teacher's stories, I wrote my own story of working with them. I struggled to try to weave our stories together. I reflected many times on our stories to allow themes to emerge. I questioned myself and tried to put myself into their situations in order to understand their stories, the ways they presented themselves to me so I could reconstruct their stories of teaching dilemmas. It was at this point that I experienced "real" growth in myself and began to understand what teaching was and how we, as teachers, use our philosophy to help us manage our dilemmas in teaching.

As I am writing this final chapter of our stories, I still keep in touch with the two teachers. Every time I revisit our stories, they give new meanings to me and compel me to question myself, my teaching and my philosophy. I learned and grew both professionally and personally from working and sharing stories with them.

Re-visiting the Research Methodology: Anonymity or Visibility

In my research proposal, both Carol and Michael were given pseudonyms to protect their rights to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. However, as I began to talk to both of them from the beginning of the research study, they wanted to have their "real" voices in the research. Both Carol and Michael did not view themselves as powerless and in need of protection. They wanted to be recognized for who they were in their teaching. Both agreed to use their "real" names instead of their pseudonyms in their stories. As a researcher, I thought that if this study intended to be a collaborative one, teachers should be recognized for their own accomplishments. One of my intentions for research was to empower the teachers' voices. I was glad both of them preferred visibility to anonymity (Shulman, 1990). The names of all other individuals and institutions who collaborated with this study were changed to protect their privacy and confidentiality.

Re-visiting the Research Experiences

It has been almost two years from the time I wrote my proposal. As I revisited my proposal by reading and rereading it, I could feel that I saw things differently now that I had finished my research journey. I could see myself changing as I journeyed with Carol and Michael.

When I began the inquiry, I saw dilemma as a contradiction which could be solved and could not be resolved by teachers. Even though I was quite aware from the beginning of my study that dilemmas were inclined to create internal conflict for teachers more than external conflict, I was still not sure about my thought. I did not have a clear picture of what internal conflicts meant to me. I also had a question about teachers' philosophies. Even though I knew how a teacher's philosophy developed, I was not really sure what philosophy meant to me. I wondered whether teachers could change their philosophies and how their philosophies helped them manage their teaching dilemmas. At the beginning of the study, the three of us did not look at dilemmas in terms of the creative opportunities they presented. We sometimes saw them in terms of problems to be solved and sometimes we felt a little awkward about using the word "dilemma" to talk about our teaching. Carol had mentioned at one time that the word itself seemed like something was wrong with our teaching. At the beginning of our journey together, I rarely mentioned the word "dilemma" to them because I felt within myself that something was wrong with the word. I was reluctant to use the word. I also felt that if I told other teachers I had dilemmas, they would think that I did not do a good job in my teaching. At the beginning, Michael also did not view dilemmas as a part of teaching or he might not be aware of his teaching dilemmas. When I could not identify his dilemmas, he told me that maybe we needed to look for one.

When I came to Carol's and Michael's classrooms, we began our work by sharing each other's stories. As a researcher, I felt I was an outsider but also an insider in their classrooms. As an insider, I shared their teaching stories by working with them in their classrooms. I learned from working and observing them in their classrooms not only as a researcher who wanted to be a part of their lives but also as a teacher who was always looking for ways to improve my teaching with young children. I got to know their children and shared the children's lives which helped me to make connections to their teaching. One of the things that helped me understand my teaching and their teaching came from listening to the children's stories. Through sharing my stories of the children, I could see how Carol and Michael used their own personal practical knowledge in their teaching. After the school day was finished, we had conversations. Our conversations were not externally motivated as a part of the research methodology of the study (McKay, 1990). I believed our conversations occurred because of our desires to share our stories, to make sense of our own experiences, and to figure out ways to live with our dilemmas. Our conversations were based on the trust we had with each other when we tried to tell stories that had been lived but seldom told (Connelly & Clandinin, forthcoming). Each of us shared our classroom stories, our struggles, our uncertainties, our dilemmas and concerns of our work with the children. In sharing our stories, we took turns as storyteller and as listener. As a researcher, I felt that it was very important to be both teller and listener. It was important for us as we worked together to develop a sense of caring, thoughtfulness, and sensitivity for each other. In our conversations, we responded and questioned each other with a sense of caring. At one time I questioned myself about being a listener in this research. I was not sure whether I did a good job as a listener and a researcher. I asked Carol about my role and she said,

> When you sensed that I wasn't answering fully or talking freely then you talked more until I jumped in. You're very good, Nophanet. You're really good at talking to. It was easy to talk with you. **(March 18, 1992, p. 26)**

In some situations, it was not necessary for us to say anything to each other about how we felt about a specific classroom event because I thought we both felt it with our minds and bodies. Words were not important. Empathic silence and body language were more significant than words themselves (Noddings, 1991). Once when Carol told me about the death of a student in her school, I could not say anything. I only looked at her through her eyes and touched one of her arms. We were silent but inside us we knew we cared for each other. At first I thought working with Michael would be harder because he was a male teacher. However as time went by, we knew each other better and developed trust between each other.

As we shared our teaching stories, we realized that new knowledge was created along the way. We gained more confidence in our knowing as teachers and learners. We felt our voices were heard. As we began to listen to our own voices, our own stories, we tried to connect each part of our stories together and learned to tell new stories of teaching. Through our conversations, we questioned our philosophies and actions in the classrooms and began to be aware that we constructed and reconstructed our philosophies and lives over time.

We also came to realize that dilemmas were a part of our teaching. As we reflected on our teaching, we came to realize about our dilemmas. As a person and a researcher, I believed that reflective and thoughtful teachers experienced many dilemmas in their teaching lives. Because of their nature of caring for other people, their students and their teaching, teachers ended up facing dilemmas. This happened to Carol and Michael. By being teachers who thought deeply about their teaching, they were attentive to their philosophies, their teaching, their students, and the contexts of the classrooms. As they tried to make things fit together, they experienced dilemmas. However, the three of us realized our dilemmas were unexpected and unsolvable. Each of us framed our dilemmas in different ways depending on our past experiences, our philosophies, and the context of the classrooms. We found that most of our teaching dilemmas were internal conflicts. They came from ourselves and the ways we viewed the world. We came to understand that we framed our dilemmas from the things we were aware of in our teaching and, by framing our dilemmas, we set directions for our actions (Schon, 1987). We saw dilemmas as something that challenged our teaching abilities more than as problems that we needed to solve in a specific time and space. We looked at dilemmas in terms of creative opportunities for us to stop, think, and question our philosophies and actions in the classrooms. Dilemmas created a space for us to reflect on our teaching. From reflecting on our teaching stories, we learned that our lives and teaching were full of surprises, and dilemmas were one of the surprises that we faced in our teaching. Our teaching became more like an adventure, not an easy journey. We realized that as teachers we lived lives of discontinuity and fluidity (Bateson, 1989). As a result, we saw dilemmas as something that helped us to reshape and reinterpret our lives and teaching. Carol felt that experiencing dilemmas in her teaching practice helped her reflect more on her philosophy and her actions in the classroom. Her teaching became more like an adventure in itself. It was full of surprises and wonders and that made her teaching more interesting and satisfying in itself. "It's more satisfying, you know. It takes more skill. I think right now it's a challenge for me. It occupies my mind a lot" (**Conversation; March 25, 1992, p. 10**). Michael viewed dilemmas as part of his learning process that helped him grow both as a teacher and a learner. "I think that dilemma is a necessary part of our growth" (**Conversation; April 21, 1992, p. 5**). Dilemmas helped him to shape and reshape his educational philosophy over time. Like Carol, he saw dilemmas as something that challenged his ability in learning and teaching rather than as problems which needed to be solved.

At the end of the study, we shared many personal stories with each other. We became close friends. To me, one of the most important things that I got from the research study was friendship which would last longer than the research itself. Our friendship was a means, not an end in itself. Even though our work together was over about a year ago, I still think of them whenever I go to observe a school for another project. They both still live and relive in my mind. My life as a researcher and as a person changed after I worked with them. I became a more thoughtful and caring person in my conversations with other people. I could look at things and listen to them through other people's eyes and ears. I could imagine what it was like for other people in specific situations by putting myself in their shoes. At the same time, I became more critical and reflective about myself and about the way I viewed the world. I learned an awareness that the way I interpret the world is based on my previous experiences of it, my own personal experiences or those handed down to me by my parents or teachers (Schutz, 1953). I came to understand more about the multiple realities of teaching and of the world (Collins, 1974). Each individual constructed his/her own reality. For example, my own reality of the world was not necessarily that of my parents, but to understand them the way they were, I could learn to imagine their world of realities. As a person, a teacher, and a researcher, I came to Carol's and Michael's classrooms with my own realities, my own stories, just as they had theirs. Each of our realities was "real." Through our conversation, we helped each other clarify, expand, share, confirm, and reflect on our realities. Most of all, we tried to remind each other that there were "realities" other than our own (McKay, 1990). From working with Carol and Michael, I learned when to talk and when to listen. Both of them offered me their lives as examples for my own life. I learned a lot about moral dilemmas from taking a closer look not only at my life but their lives as well. Most of all, by looking at their lives, I learned to shape and reshape my own.

What Helped Us in Handling Our Teaching Dilemmas

As Carol, Michael and I reflected on our teaching stories as a whole, we wanted to make explicit the ways we felt were important in helping us manage our teaching dilemmas. My purpose in this final chapter is to outline what the three of us believed is important for teachers in managing their dilemmas.

As teachers we viewed ourselves as knowledgeable and knowing persons. We believed that every teacher holds a kind of knowledge called personal practical knowledge which is expressed in his/her teaching practices (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988b). This knowledge is constructed and re-constructed over time as we live and relive our lives both inside and outside schools (Clandinin, Davies, Hogan, Kennard, 1993). As we shared our stories together, we came to realize that the knowledge we gained through our life experiences is important and valuable. Both Carol and Michael viewed their out-of-school experiences as their most powerful learning experiences (Belenky et. al. 1986). As a mother, Carol felt that her experiences of taking care of her children were very important in helping her develop her educational philosophy. While taking care of them, she had opportunities to observe how they learn. Michael worked as a volunteer with Boy Scouts, as a drama teacher and at an out-of-school-care program for five years before he decided he wanted to be a teacher. Michael felt that he learned a lot about teaching and working with young children from his out-of-school experiences. As a person, I came to realize that I could take a course in child development and get high marks and still not know how to take care of a child. It might be like a person who went to a temple to listen to a sermon every religious day but still lived a pretty "low life."

Therefore, we thought that it was important for us as teachers to be aware of ourselves and of what we believe about teaching and learning. The three of us reflected on our stories of teaching and of our lives over time as we worked together. We felt that reflection on action was necessary for us because it helped us recognize our dilemmas. By being aware of our teaching dilemmas, we tended to frame, name and manage them (Schon, 1987). To us, reflection did not need to be only writing. It could be through talking or thinking quietly by ourselves about our days of teaching. I found that quiet reflection on my days before I went to sleep was useful because it helped me understand what I had done and what I would do the next day. Both Carol and Michael found that talking to me after their teaching was helpful for them because it helped them reflect on their teaching stories. They found that as they were in the middle of their teaching, it was very hard for them to see a whole picture of their teaching. By reflecting on their teaching stories, both of them understood their teaching, why they did what they did. At the same time, it helped them figure out their future, what they would do to handle their teaching better. The three of us came to realize that awareness of self was very important in helping us frame and manage our dilemmas. As Michael said, many teachers are in the middle of their dilemmas without being aware that they are in them. We believed that the ability to know who we were, where we came from and what we were going to do was important.

In our journey together, we also shared our past experiences as children, students and teachers. As we retold our past stories, we could see the connection between our pasts and our presents. We analyzed our pasts, related it to our presents and tried to figure out ways to live for the future. Personally, I felt I began to understand my story better by both retelling my own story and listening to the two teachers' stories. As they shared their stories with me, I not only heard echoes of my story but also began to make sense of my own story (Clandinin, 1993). Reflection helped us to construct and reconstruct our educational philosophies so that our philosophies could fit with our contexts. Throughout our research journey, we saw our lives as always in composition, not finished. None of us had completed our stories. Instead, we were aware that we would keep changing depending on time and space. We found it was crucial for teachers to ask themselves over time about where they came from, what they were doing, and what they were going to do next. It is only now that we could see how sharing and responding to each other's stories helped us figure out how to live with our teaching dilemmas. We also felt that the process of articulating one's own philosophy was important in the sense that it helped us, as teachers, to be aware of what we wanted most in our teaching in that particular space and time. As persons, we were aware that in our lives, we could not get everything we wanted to. Therefore, in our teaching, we had to weigh what we wanted most and what was best for our children.

One thing we found important for us as teachers was having a community with whom to share our struggles, our uncertainties, and our dilemmas. The three of us searched for others who would help us think about our teaching stories in a caring atmosphere. Community for us did not need to be many people. It could be someone that we trusted and felt safe to share our stories with, someone who really cared about our stories and who knew us well. Both Carol and Michael had developed their own communities with whom to share their teaching stories. During the time I worked with Carol, she had two support groups one inside and one outside of school. With her support groups, Carol felt that she shared not only the community of time but of space (Schutz, 1953). Sharing a community of space meant they shared several commonalities and trust with each other. In her community outside of school, Carol met with two other teachers she could trust. They shared similar backgrounds and a philosophy with her. Like herself, Sheila, one of the teachers, had taught at the Preprimary Program. Brenda, the other teacher, also worked at the Preprimary Program. They met at least every two months and they found they had a lot of stories to share. Carol articulated,

> We try to get together at least every two months or so and just talk---what's happening in their---they're on my wavelength. There are the same kind of frustrations. Their story is different because their class has gone different

> ways. So, when the three of us meet from different directions, me from the separate board, Sheila from the public board, and Brenda from the Preprimary Program, you know, we all mix it up together. (**Conversation; June 3, 1992, p. 13**)

Carol tried to build her own communities not only with her colleagues but with her students and their parents. She tried to build a caring community in her classroom by inviting the parents to visit the classroom. In her teaching, she tried to encourage her children to share their stories and to help each other in their learning.

Like Carol, Michael developed his own community with his colleagues in the school, his teacher assistant, his principal, the children and their parents. Because his school was very small, it functioned more like a family. The teachers, the parents and the children developed a strong sense of community. In his school, Michael felt safe to share his struggles, his uncertainties, and his dilemmas with other teachers. When he was working in the school, he felt like he was at home. "I like to come back here to this school because I feel like home" (**Conversation; March 24, 1992, p. 8**).

Both Carol and Michael viewed me as one of their communities with whom they could share their stories, someone who not only listened to their stories but also shared my own stories. A community for us might be a safe place, a place where we could each be heard, where everyone could voice his/her uncertainties (Connelly & Clandinin, forthcoming). We also looked for confirmation in sharing our own stories. We needed somebody who could respond to us, someone who did not act as a representative of a position but as an individual with a particular style of thinking (Belenky et. al., 1986). Michael once mentioned to me about how important it was for him to have confirmation from one of his colleagues to get through his first year of teaching. "She (his colleague) told me that I was doing a good job and not to worry about it" (**Conversation; March 24, 1992, p. 8**). As Michael told me about his experiences as a beginning teacher, I could see myself in his story. As a beginning teacher and later as an experienced teacher, there were many days that I felt down about myself, about my teaching. I was not sure whether I did a good job in teaching. In my teaching and life, I searched for someone who trusted me, believed in me and cared for me enough to confirm to me that I did a fine job in my teaching and life.

Therefore, when I had opportunities to work with Carol and Michael in their classrooms, I listened to their stories and provided responses to them. As their friend, I cared for them, believed in them and valued their abilities in teaching. I was always aware that both of them did their best in their teaching. I saw myself more as their supporter, their friend, than as a researcher. At the same time, I saw them as my supporter, my friends, and my "teachers." Through the long process of my writing, both Carol and Michael always encouraged me. They both believed that I could make it. Both Carol and Michael told me how important it was for them to have responses from me. They saw me as a "mirror" for their teaching. Both of them felt the questions I asked and the responses I gave them helped them reflect on their teaching. Carol said,

> That's what I mean is mirroring. Like you are a mirror for me because what I have done you had seen and thought about and you asked me back, or you tell me back, so you gave me a chance to reflect on that image back again, like mirroring. **(Conversation; June 3, 1992, p. 5)**

Michael also felt that the opportunities to share his stories with me helped him see his dilemmas more clearly. He could see his picture of teaching as a whole. Michael felt that when he was in his teaching, it was hard for him to see a whole picture of himself **(Journal; May 3, 1993)**.

In responding to the two teachers, it was very important for me to understand their stories from their points of views. It was also important to understand the contexts of their stories. It would not help if the person who gave the response did not know the teachers well and criticized their stories because it would be "hurtful more than helpful" (Belenky et. al., 1986, p. 222).

The three of us also realized the importance of developing another kind of space for ourselves, an inner space, a space where we chose to be with ourselves, looking into ourselves and exploring the ways we are. As human beings, we sometimes need quiet moments to be with ourselves and to think through things on our own. We need time to detach ourselves from the world and to focus on our inner-selves (Morgan, 1986). I believe that deep within each person there is a quiet place that truly identifies the self (Morgan, 1986). Both Carol and Michael developed their own inner space to reflect on themselves and their teaching. In trying to manage her dilemmas with the grade one children the year before I came to her classroom, Carol spent both her own inner time and space in reflecting on her teaching and on the context of her classroom. Michael also mentioned his inner space when he reflected on his "tough" days in teaching and tried to figure out how to make his days better. As a person, I also had my own inner space. I loved to walk alone and to reflect on things that went on in my life and to sometimes try to figure out ways to live my life better.

We viewed teaching as an ongoing inquiry and dilemmas as a part of the inquiry (Clandinin, Davies, Hogan, & Kennard, 1993). As teachers, we were aware that teaching was a hard job, full of dilemmas. There were a lot of days as I was teaching, I felt exhausted. Carol and Michael had similar experiences. There were some days they both felt tired and exhausted. Some days were tougher than other days. As we recognized this reality of teaching, it provided us with a space to come together and to share our struggles, our uncertainties, and our dilemmas. The questions we kept asking ourselves as we shared our stories was, "How could we make all those tough days better?, What did we learn from them?" The three of us viewed our teaching as an inquiry, an ongoing inquiry into both our lives and the children's lives (Clandinin, Davies, Hogan, & Kennard, 1993). Some days when we were in the middle of our teaching, we felt down. But as we looked back to our teaching as a whole, we still felt in our minds and bodies that our teaching was full of moments of wonder, of moments for inquiry. Teaching reflected life. When we looked at our lives in parts, we could see that there were both "good" days and "bad" days. But as we looked at our lives as wholes and tried to make sense of them, we realized that they were still "good" lives, worth living. In teaching, if we tried to imagine ourselves looking through our children's eyes, we could see the wonder of teaching and learning, of life, and of the world and we believed that this was what kept the three of us going back to our teaching.

Our stories, my research journey with Carol and Michael, no longer exist. Only our relationships still go on. Both of them have gone on to compose their lives in new settings, new ways that I was not a part of. As in every story, the ending of one story led into a new story. Both Carol and Michael have gone on to begin their new stories, their new lives. Carol moved to another school to be a full-time kindergarten teacher. Michael came back to a university to complete his Master's Degree and to go on to do a Ph.D. Both of them still experience a lot of dilemmas in their lives and teaching and still learn to manage them. I also went on with my life as a student, a teacher, and a researcher and still struggle to find ways to manage my own dilemmas. Each of us saw this research journey as one part of our lives, our teaching. It was an opportunity for us to come to work together, to inquire into our teaching and our lives. It was a story of time because it was a moment in time that this research happened and ended. Our lives, our teaching, still go on. Our research journey together is a memory that each of us can revisit at any time but we all realize that we have to live the ongoing inquiries of our lives.

Postscript: The New Beginning

> To take a stranger's vantage point on everyday reality is to look inquiringly and wonderingly on the world in which one lives. It is like returning home from a long stay in some other place. The homecomer notices details and patterns in his environment he never saw before. He finds that he has to think about local rituals and customs to make sense of them once more. For a time he feels quite separate from the person who is wholly at home in his ingroup and takes the familiar world for granted. (Greene, 1973, p. 268)

I was overwhelmed as I read through Maxine Greene's book, Teacher As Stranger. I asked myself, "What is it like to return home after being away for six years? What are the expectations of my colleagues? What do they want to know and hear from me? How can I connect my stories to their stories?"

As I thought through the questions over and over, it reminded me of the situation that happened in our school six years ago. During that time one of our colleagues returned to the school after finishing her Master's degree. She was fresh, energetic, and full of new ideas. She was ready to try out things she learned from a university. As she came in and told us about her work and ideas, I began to reject her words. Her ideas did not seem to make sense to me. They did not fit with my classroom context. She seemed to be far away from the reality of the classroom. Our worlds seemed to be far apart from each other. She lived in the world of theories, and I lived in the world of practice. How could the two worlds connect to each other? As she kept on speaking, I began to stop listening. I felt as if she was trying to tell us what we should do in our classrooms. Why should I believe what she said? I could not connect my stories to her stories, my "truth" to her "truth."

When I finished my Master's degree, I visited home for about two months. I went back to the school and talked to the principal and a teacher. Like my colleague, I began to explain to the principal and the teacher what I had learned from the university. I tried to persuade them to do what I thought they should do according to the theories I learned. I tried to impose my ideas of good teaching on them rather than listening to their ideas of good teaching. Most of all, I wanted them to listen to the theories of others as I had absorbed them.

As I reflected on the situation, I realized I did not give the principal and the teacher opportunities to tell their stories, to listen to their own voices. I did not want to hear their stories. I acted as an authority who came in to talk about the theories I valued and what I thought they should do in our school. When my principal did not agree with my ideas, I was upset. I thought she did not appreciate my "new" knowledge, my new "truth." As I looked back, I became aware that my "new" knowledge was boring, lacked soul and, most importantly, it excluded the essence of my own understandings about self, about life and about teaching. My "new" knowledge was only bits and pieces of words and ideas. There were no struggles, no conflicts, and no dilemmas. Most of all, there was no space for the principal and teacher to create their own "truth," to tell their stories.

After writing up this research, I thought about new possibilities to live my teaching stories. However, I did not feel that it was right for me to prescribe future teacher education programs. I also did not want to be the person who went into the school and told my colleagues what they should do in their classrooms anymore. I did not want to prescribe how they should think about teaching. I now believed that my colleagues were experts in their own teaching and it was their stories that should be valued and heard as a starting point. One of the things I hope is that the stories told in this research study will affect other teachers' stories and will give them space to tell their own stories. I also see new possibilities for looking at teaching. As teachers, we do not need to tell only "good" stories of teaching. We need also to tell stories of our struggles and dilemmas for they are also part of our teaching and our lives.

In the future I want to share stories of the research with my colleagues. I want to tell parts of Carol's, Michael's, and my stories, our struggles in teaching, with the hopes that our stories will affect their stories. Our struggles are recounted in the stories and, because of our struggles, we have become more aware of who we are, where we come from, and what we want to do in the future. In the process of telling and retelling stories, I have attempted to leave enough space for other teachers to put themselves into the stories and have invited them to share their own stories of teaching, their own "truths." By sharing our stories of lives and teaching, teachers have opportunities to listen to their own voices, to reflect on their philosophies and actions in the classrooms, and, most of all, to recognize their teaching dilemmas. I now understand that it is very important for teachers to exchange their own stories with each other. If teachers are isolated one from the other and not allowed to share their personal accounts of their lives, it is impossible for them to find their own voices, their own narratives. They may not come to realize who they are in connection with their worlds.

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